4
PUMPKIN SCISSORS
Ryotaro Iwanaga

Pumpkin Scissors

Imperial Army State Section III

by
Ryotaro Iwanaga

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North Market Street Graphics

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Noblemen also
have families and
loved ones!

—Ryotaro Iwanaga

Pumpkin Scissors 4

Ryotaro Iwanaga

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About This Story

The bloody war between the Empire and the Republic of Frost left a deep wound throughout the Empire.

Three years have passed since the cease-fire, now known as the Thin Ice Treaty. The Empire is still plagued with starvation and disease while gangs of former soldiers terrorize the populace. The Empire is now fighting another battle to repair the destruction of war. Imperial Army State Section III was established as a "propaganda" tool to placate the masses. However, the members of Imperial Army State Section III, known as "Pumpkin Scissors," are committed to cutting through the thick skin of corruption and crime to bring justice to the people...

Solice

Alice's older sister — the oldest daughter of the Malvin family. Married. She has nerves of steel underneath her gentle and relaxed demeanor.

Elis

Alice's older sister and the second oldest daughter of the Malvin family. Married. Her dynamic and passionate personality combines well with her sharp intuition. She cares for Alice deeply.

Lionel

Alice's fiancee. He's not a high-ranking nobleman, but his talent and charisma have made him the toast of high society. He's known as the young "Lion" of the financial world.

Lord Paulo

The economic director of the Empire. A brutal, arrogant man. A treacherous nobleman who willingly abuses his power. He's misappropriating public funds in secret.

Lieutenant Alice Malvin

Born into nobility, she's a straightforward and kind soul. The 2nd lieutenant for Pumpkin Scissors, she works hard to advance the cause of reconstruction and war relief for the people.

Corporal Oland

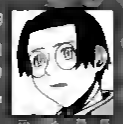
A towering giant, he was a scarred-up veteran who reenlisted into Section III. During the war, he was one of the Invisible Nine unit members.

Warrant Officer Oreldo

An officer in Pumpkin Scissors, aka "Stockade Houdini." He comes across as a mellow, light-hearted guy, but he also seems to have a serious side.

Warrant Officer Machs

He seems to be the most sensible of all the Pumpkin Scissors members. Yet he's friends with Oreldo, so there may be more than meets the eye...



Captain Hunks

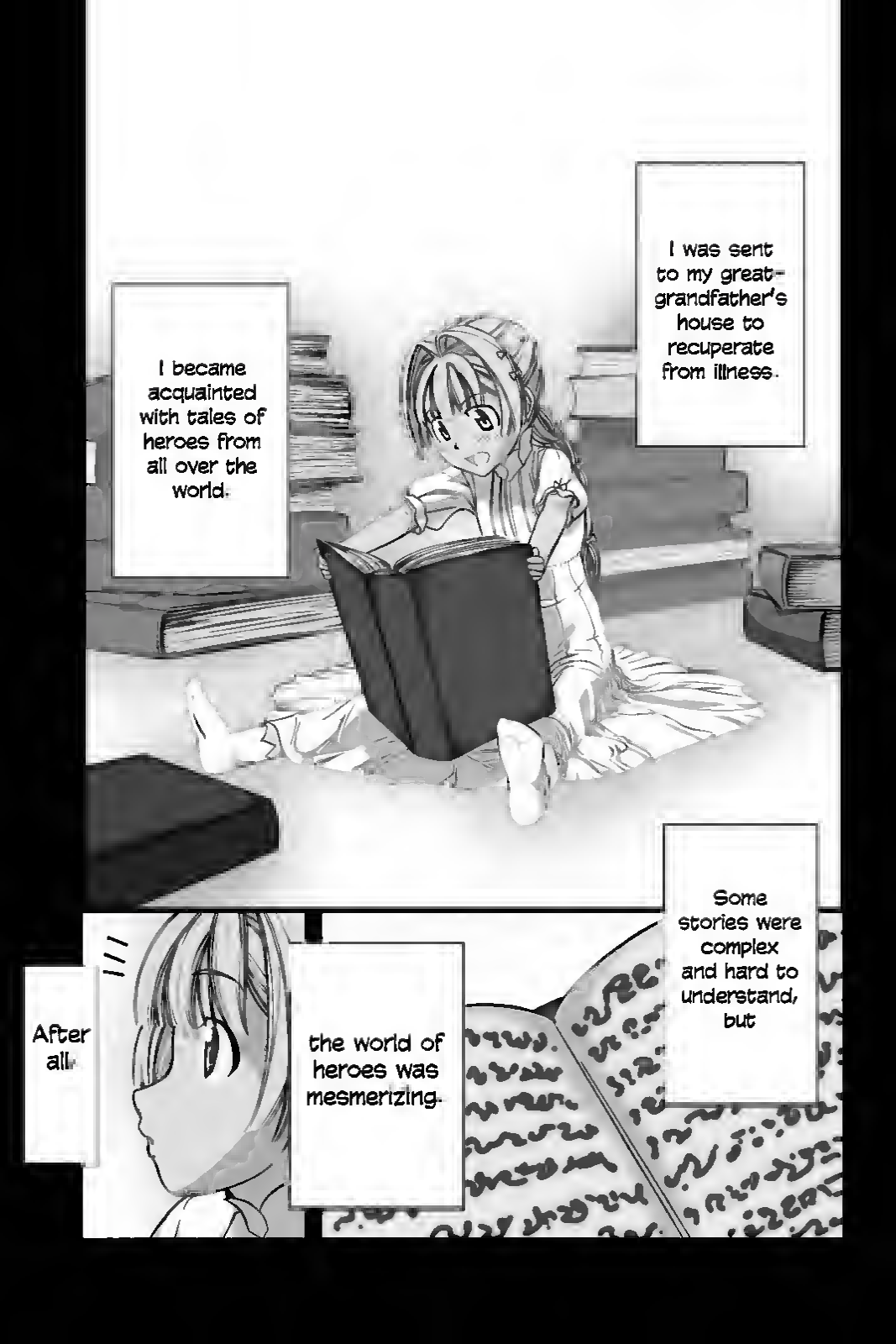
The leader of Section III. His razor-sharp mind is hidden underneath his leisurely low-key exterior.

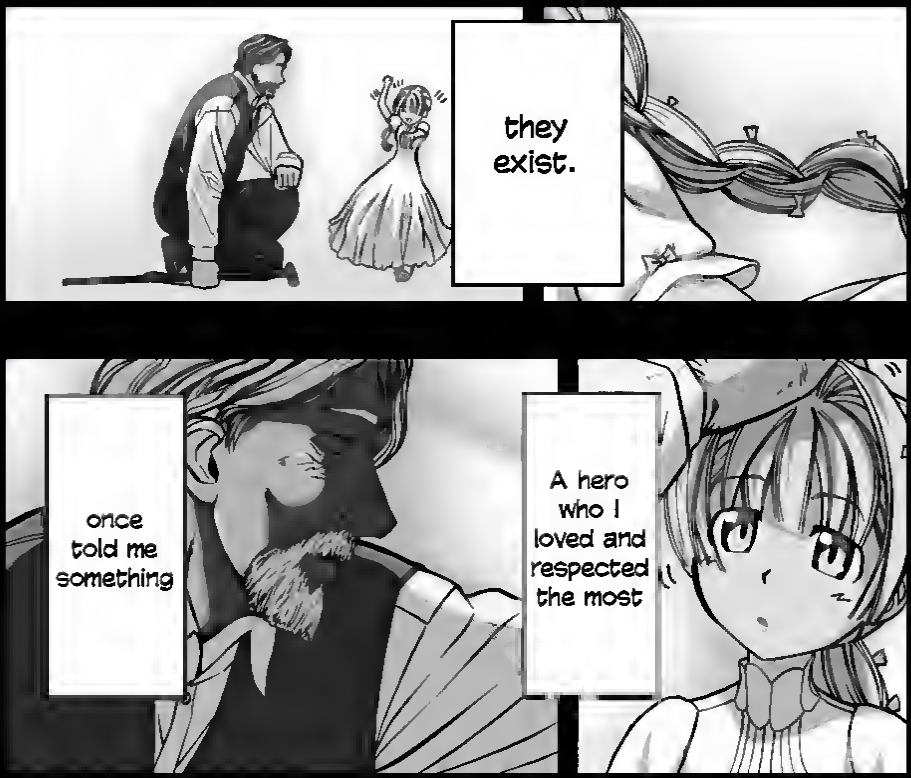
Sergeant Major Stecchin

A clumsy young girl, she's the paper pusher for Section III. She doesn't resemble a soldier, nor does she consider herself to be one.

Mercury

Section III Courier Private First Class Messenger Dog. He's a lovable male with a goofy face. He hasn't been seen recently...

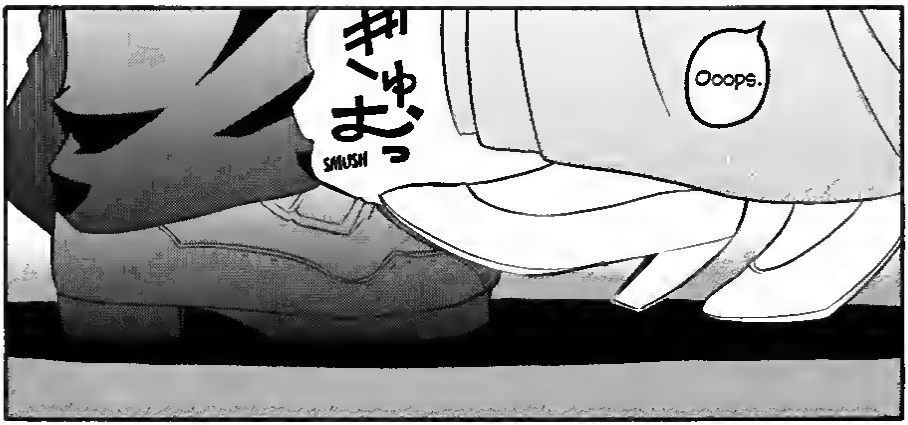

I was sent to my great-grandfather's house to recuperate from illness.
I became acquainted with tales of heroes from all over the world.
Some stories were complex and hard to understand, but
the world of heroes was mesmerizing.
After all,



with a gentle, yet melancholy expression.

We're at the ball, after all. Shall we dance, my princess?
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
GASP
How dare she!
Well, uh... I'm not familiar with such activities...
Bring yourself closer. Good. Just like that.
No need to fear! I'll teach you.

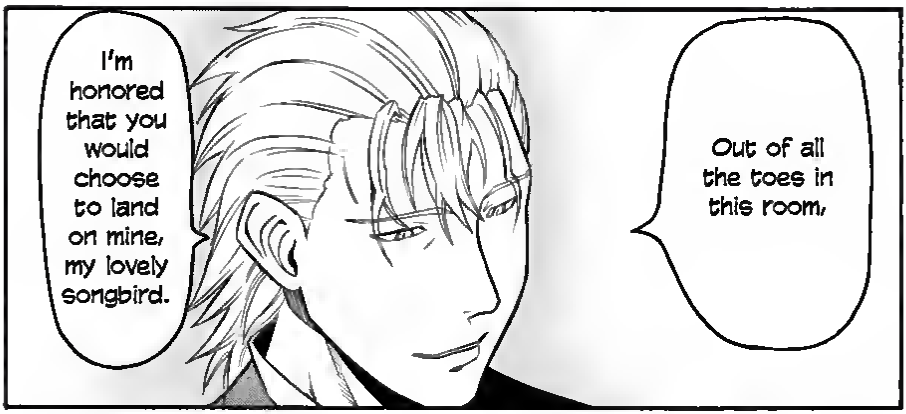
You're a fast learner.

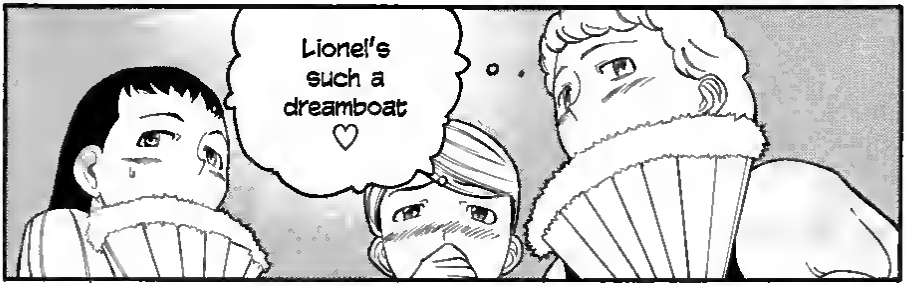

Ooops.
SMUSH

GIGGLE
GIGGLE
A noblewoman who doesn't know how to dance! Shameful?!
She stepped on his foot!
What!

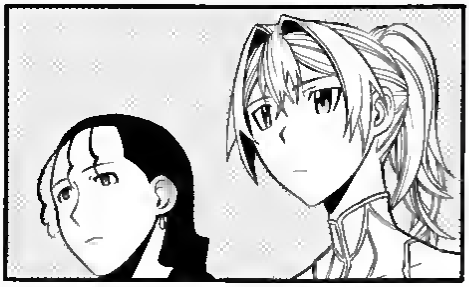
Please excuse me.

when a bird lands on its branch.
A tree does not complain

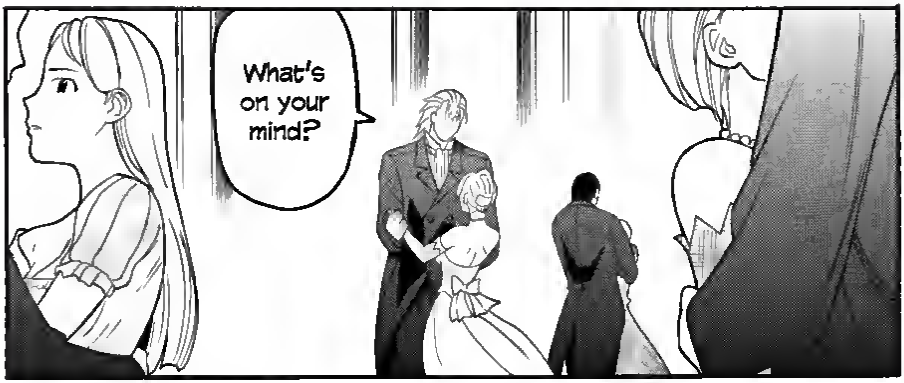

Out of all the toes in this room,
I'm honored that you would choose to land on mine, my lovely songbird.


Lione!'s such a dreamboat ♡

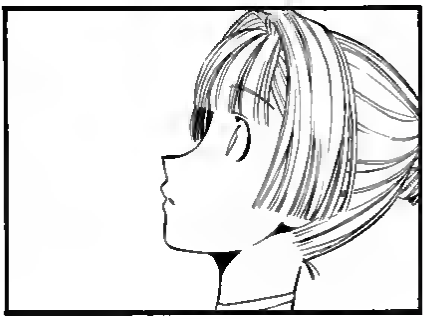
.....



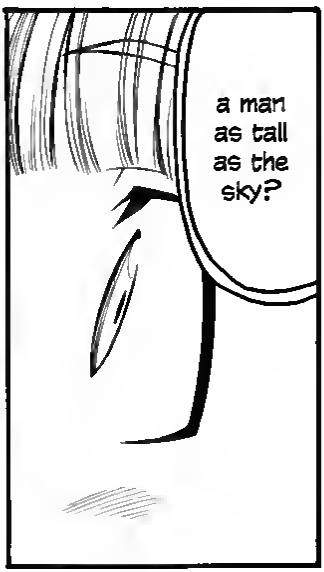
masochi—
Is he a
Silence!


What's on your mind?

Are you thinking about



You're looking above
I followed your gaze and realized some-thing.


a man as tall as the sky?

It's as if you're looking up at someone.
and past me.
This person must be a giant.

he was a giant.
Yes, I used to think
would never quit.
I thought he was an indestructible man who
He's...
that he's neither strong nor a giant
The reality is

He...
CLENCH
ギリ…
PANT
ポタッ
DRIP
PANT
PANT
ポタッ
DRIP
PANT
He's—

WAVER
He's a gentle soul who
should never have to hurt a thing...

PANT
PANT

PANT
PANT

But...
Moron! Why didn't ya aim better?

Don't let him get away!
DASH
GUAAAAAH
THUDD
Why...
HUFF
PUFF
CRACK...

SLAMM
UNH...
GACKKH...

PANT
PANT

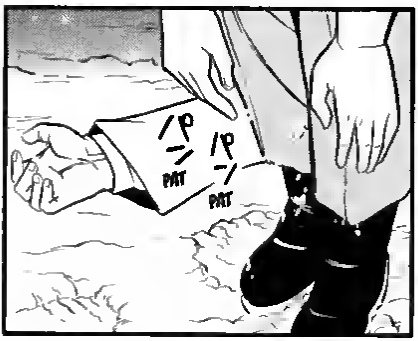
PANT
PANT
PANT

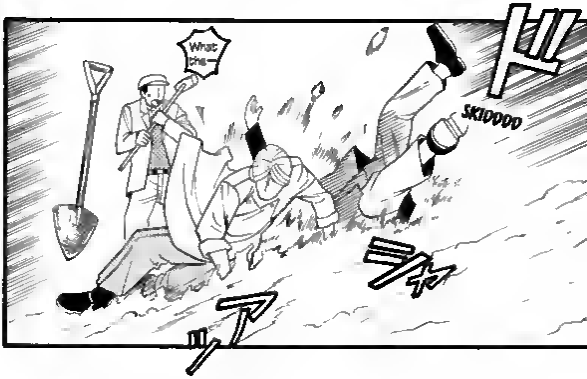
I just want to help them.
PANT
PANT
Why...

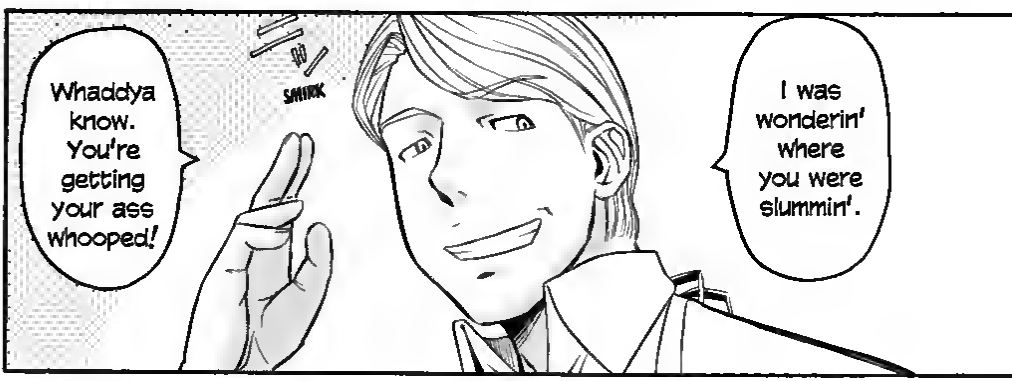
So why am I forced to
point my gun at them?!

You're askin' me why?
PAUSE
Why!
...gh
Soldiers are just like them nobles!
You get to have a comfortable life. We're the last rung on the ladder!
Even my kids understand that they're living off
Screw you!
SWING
of your scraps!

BASH


PAT
PAT


What the—
SKIDDDD


Whaddya know. You're getting your ass whooped!
SMIRK
I was wonderin' where you were slummin'.

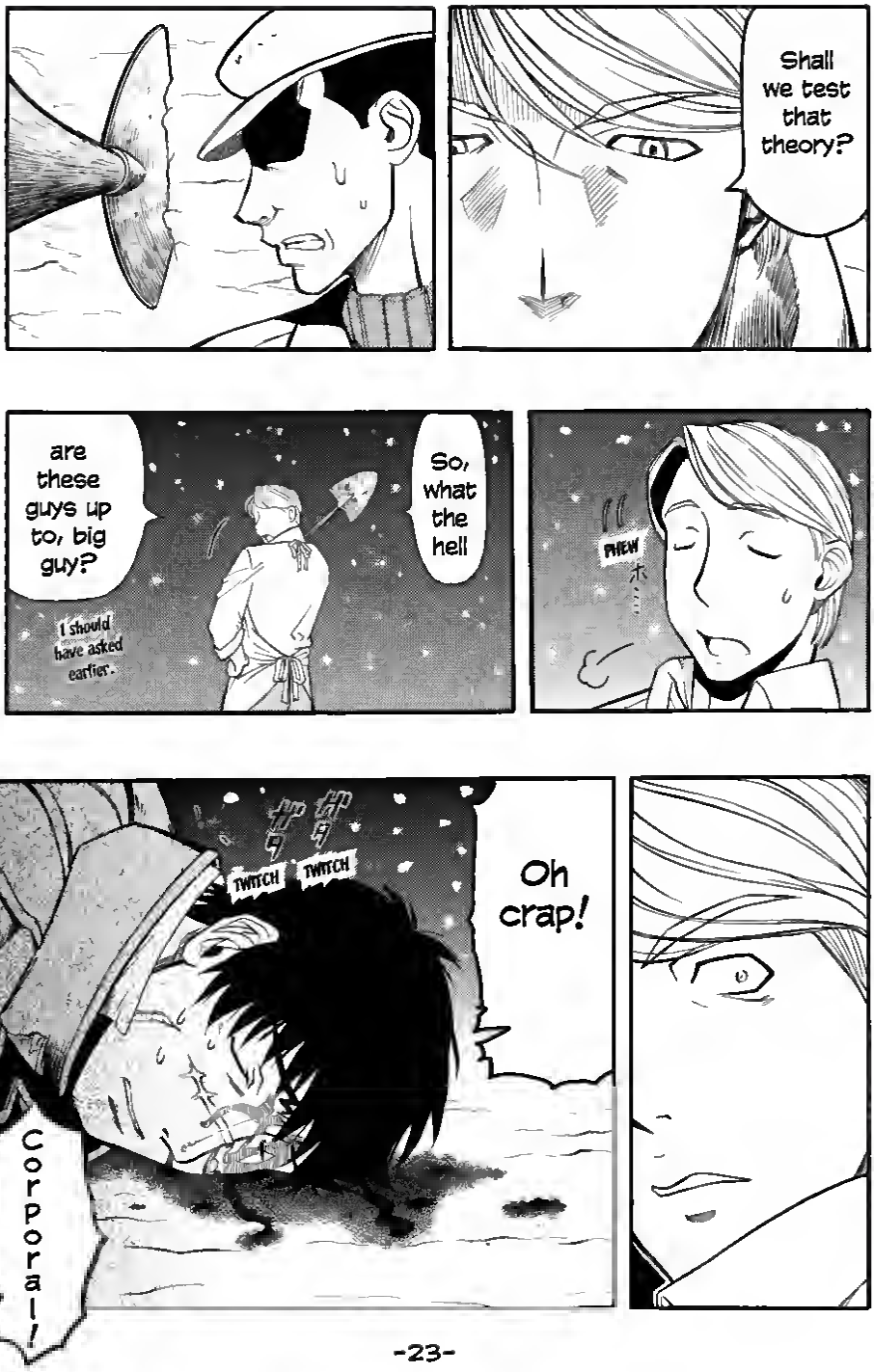
.....
!
That's a bad idea.
STOMP
STOMP
HUUUAH!!
STOMP
STOMP
Uh...
STOMP
STOMP
THRUST
below average, but
My martial arts score was

UPHH
SMACK
SLAP!

DASH
I'm not too shabby at brawlin'.

RIPP
THWUPP
I've always won.
That means I've never lost!
THUD

THRUST
How dare you!
You bastard!
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
the deadliest weapon in the trenches
According to my boss in Section iii,
It was the shovel.
CRUNCH
wasn't a knife or a gun.

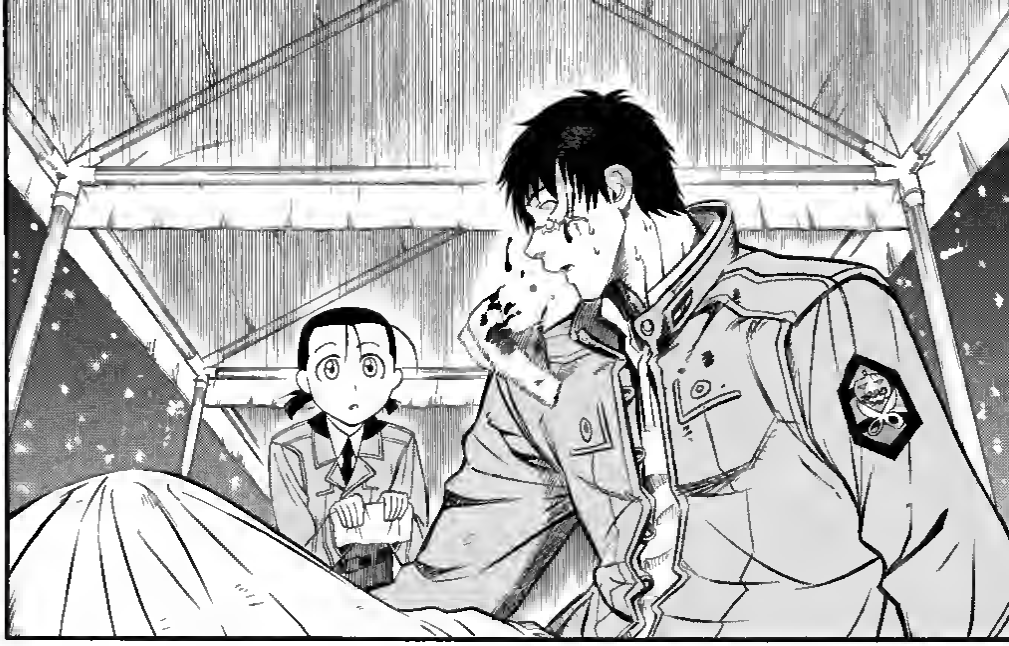

Shall we test that theory?
So, what the hell
are these guys up to, big guy?
I should have asked earlier.
PHEW
TWITCH
TWITCH
Oh crap!
Corporal!

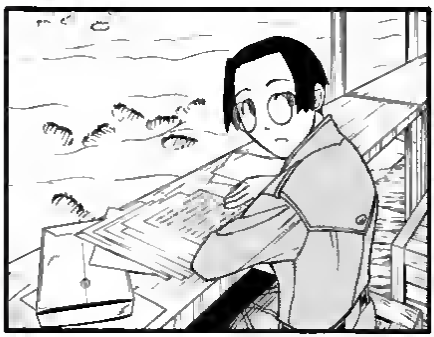
This dream again...
Oh...
Maybe it's not a dream anymore.

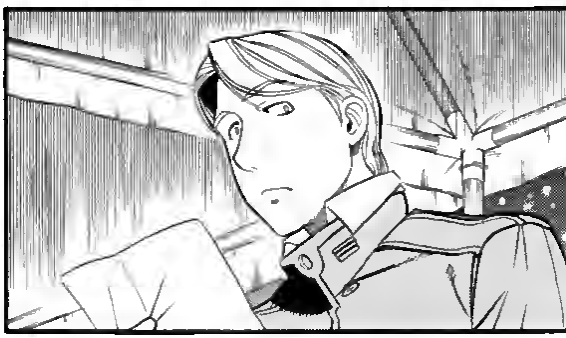
getting their revenge...
The dead are
so many...
I've killed
SPLORSH
GU
GAGG

Soon, the lieutenant will appear and I'll wake up.
It'll be all right!
Lieuten-ant?

Lieu—
sie....
Lieuten-
ant?
Kill
Töten sie
Kill
Töten sie
Kill
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
NOOOOOOOOOO







We'll take you to the hospital.
C'mon, lay down.

SIGH
You need to lay down!

First, we gotta deal with these guys.
CREAK
キィ

What's up, Machs?
Hmmm.
.....

If these numbers are accurate,
this proves that Lord Paulo's embezzling public funds

Including this one, we have 50 copies.
HMMM
ふーん…
They've been sent via various methods, I'm sure.
This is a smart plan.

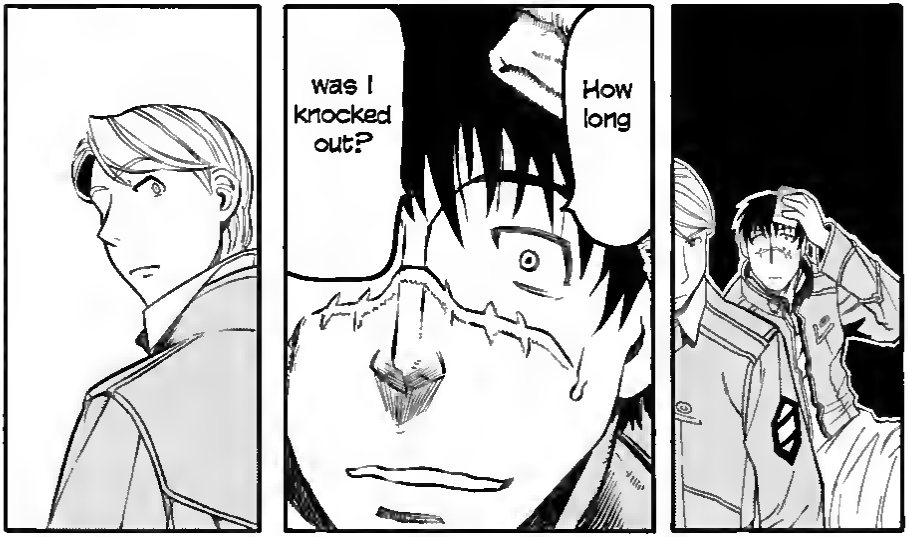
SIGH
This plan will fail.
You don't hafta tell me.
……

How on Earth did you get your hands on this?
GLANCE

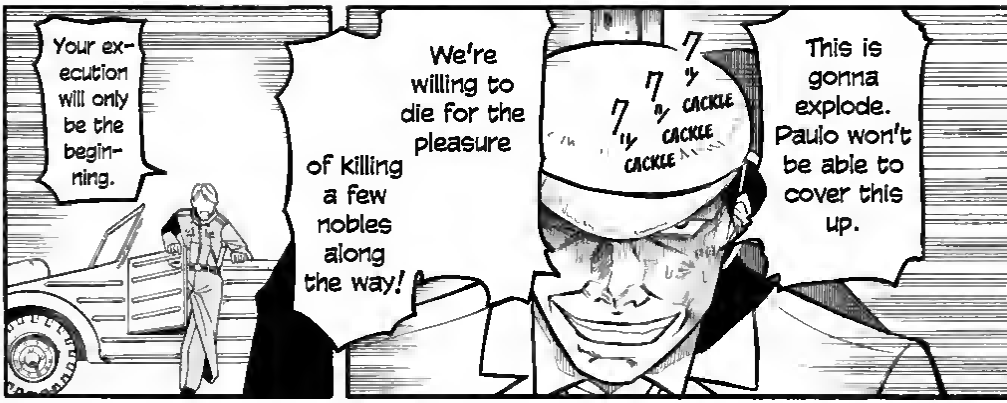
This is a huge scandal.
Section I will take over the investigation!

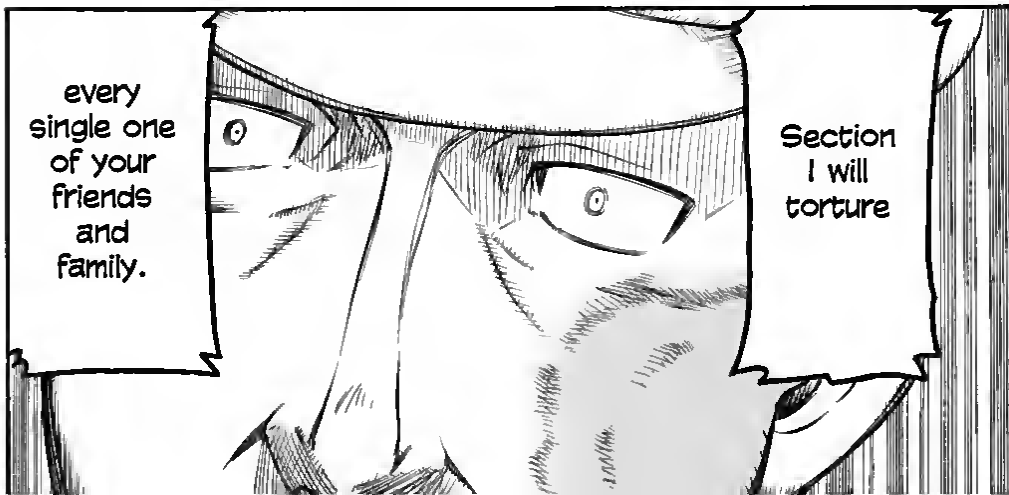
This is gonna disappear into the shadows.
and censor all mail and other modes of communi-cation.
They'll claim that they don't want to cause undue stress to the people

some-thing to say?
You have


was I knocked out?
How long

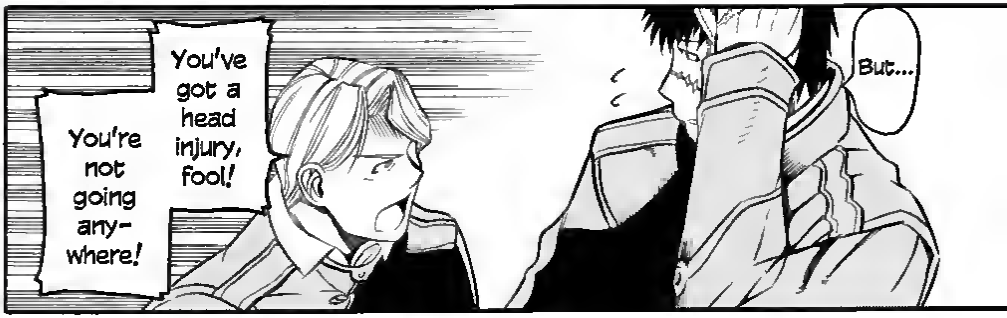
What are you thinking!?
Attack the ball!?
VROOOOOM
THUMKK
THUMKK
THUMKK

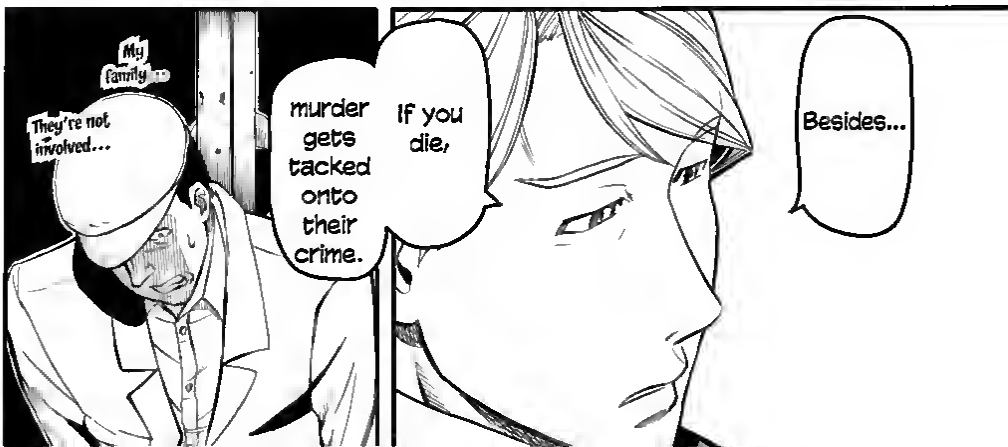

Your execution will only be the beginning.
We're willing to die for the pleasure of killing a few nobles along the way!
This is gonna explode. Paulo won't be able to cover this up.
CACKLE
CACKLE
CACKLE


every single one of your friends and family.
Section I will torture

Section I will do anything they can to find out the source.
This type of leak...
You think Section i's gonna care?
GRAB
My family has nothing to do with this!
Section i will use that as an excuse.
If a noble sheds a single drop of blood
You've got to be kidding.
We gotta hurry, Machs!
THUNKK
THUNKK
THUNKK
THUNKK

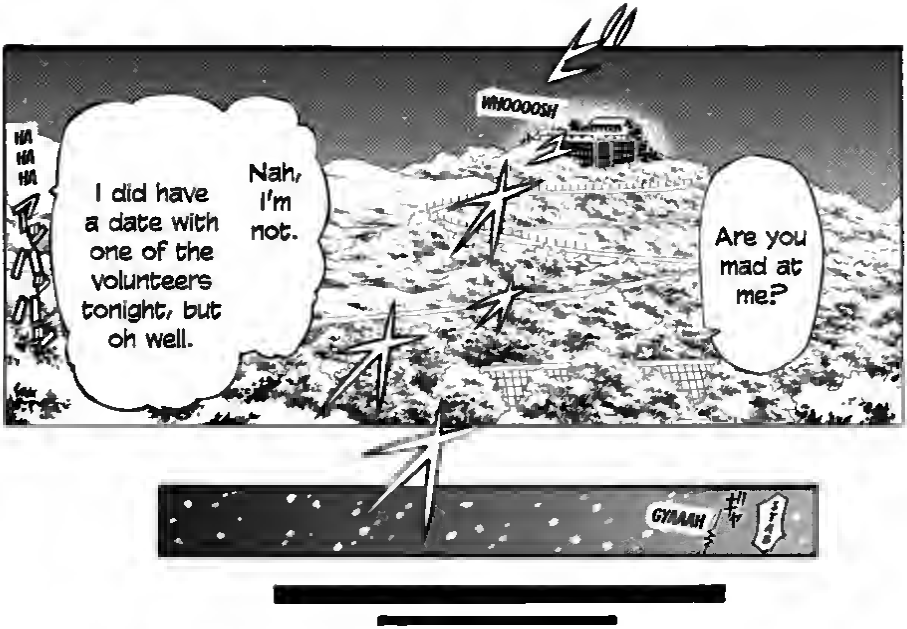
Get out of the vehicle.

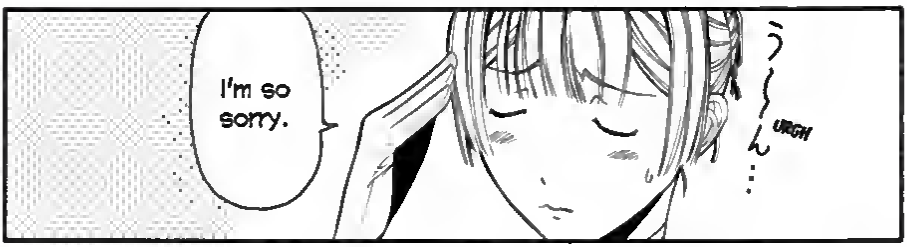

But...
You've got a head injury, fool!
You're not going anywhere!

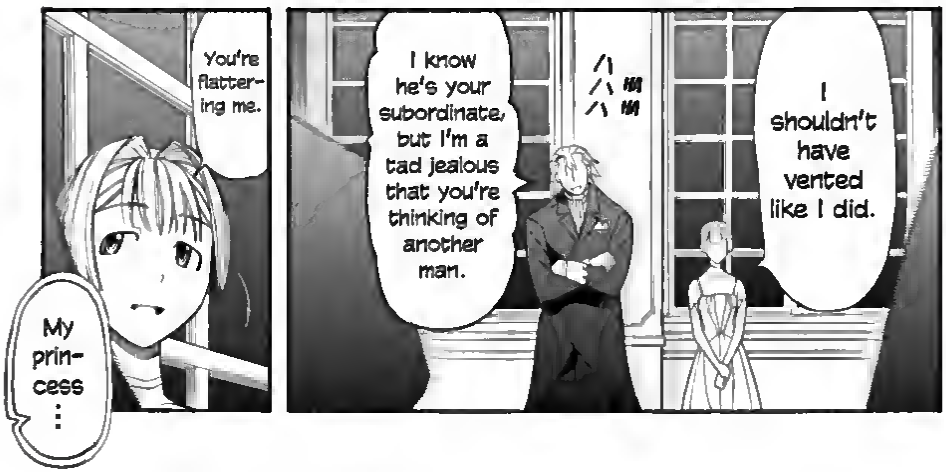

Besides...
If you die,
murder gets tacked onto their crime.
My family...
They're not involved...

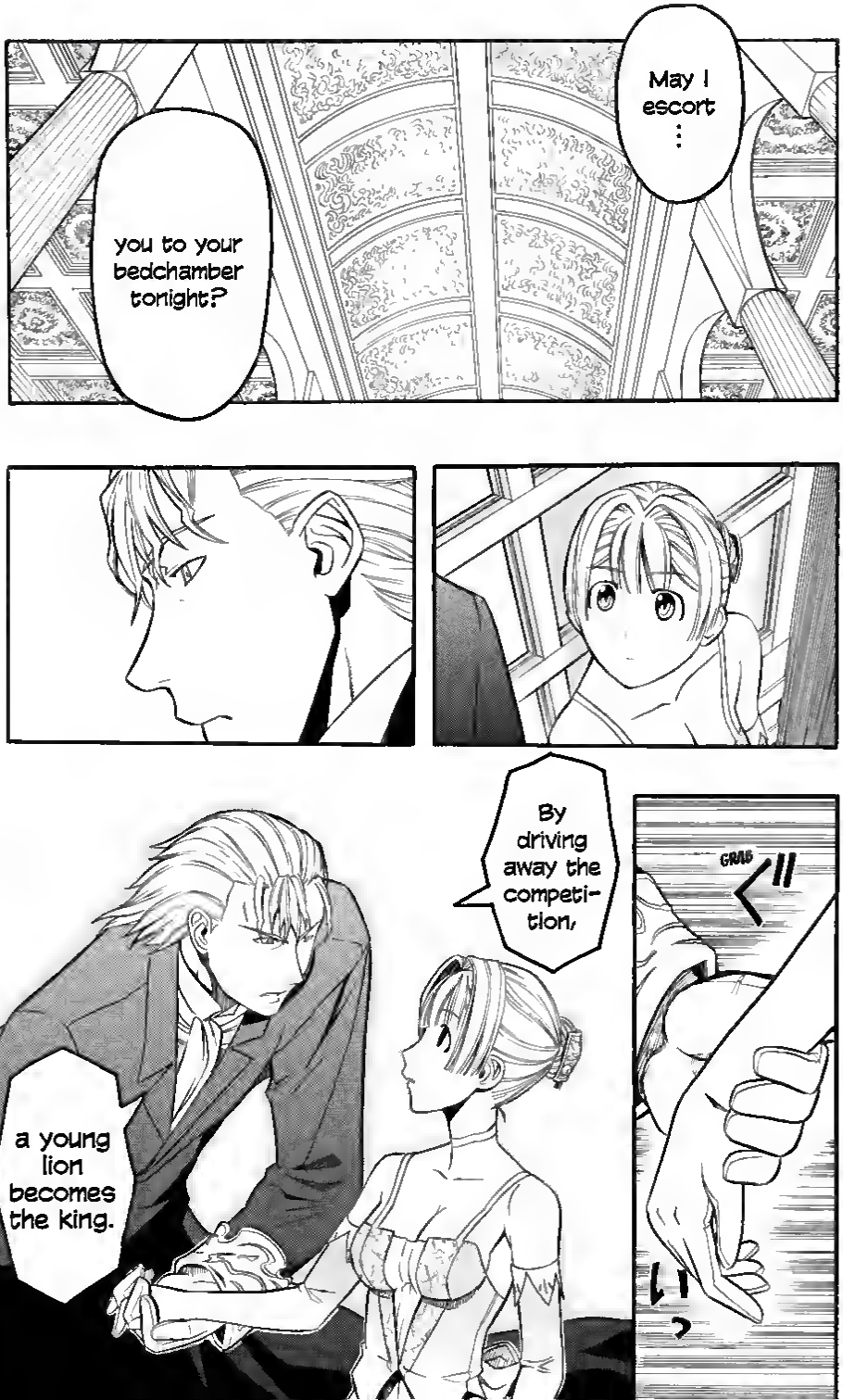
BONKK
SPLASH
Then they didn't
DRIP
hurt me. I did.
Kiddo, what you just had
Gimme.
Huh?
SIGH

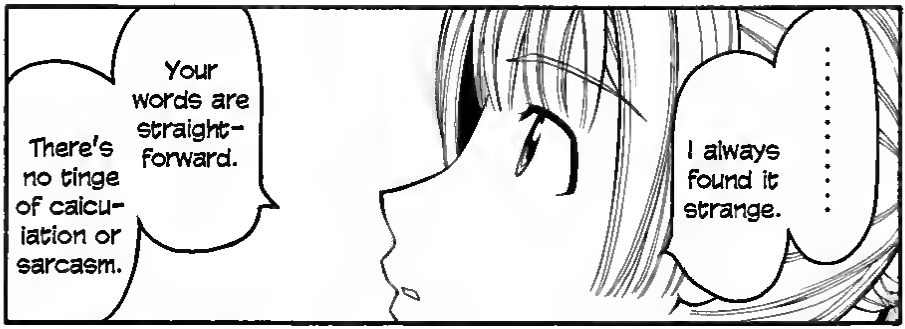
GAAAHHH!
FLASH
キュピーン
Officer!
Shaddap!
VROOOOM
You have an open wound. This is the best way for now!
I already disinfected the wound.
WHOA
うわー
うわー
うわー
WHOA
WHOA
Could you at least stop the car?
SPLITT
Corporal! You've wasted time getting a beating, passing out, and whining!
We don't have any more time to lose!

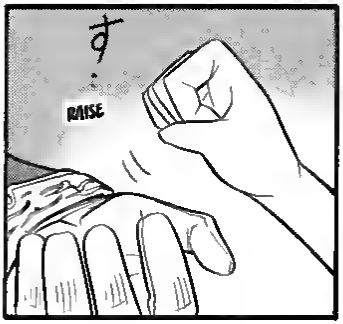

WHOOOOSH
Are you mad at me?
Nah, I'm not.
I did have a date with one of the volunteers tonight, but oh well.
HA HA HA
GYAAAH


I'm so sorry.
URGH


You're flattering me.
My princess...
I know he's your subordinate, but I'm a tad jealous that you're thinking of another man.
HA HA HA
I shouldn't have vented like I did.

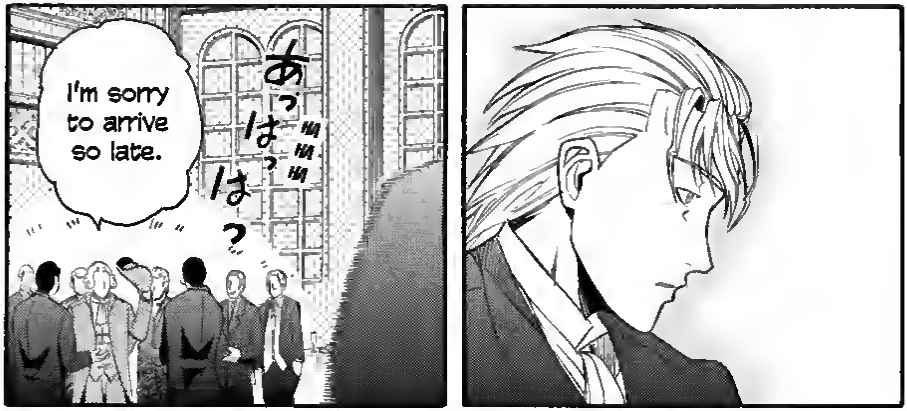

May I escort…
you to your bedchamber tonight?
By driving away the competition,
a young lion becomes the king.
GRAB
!?

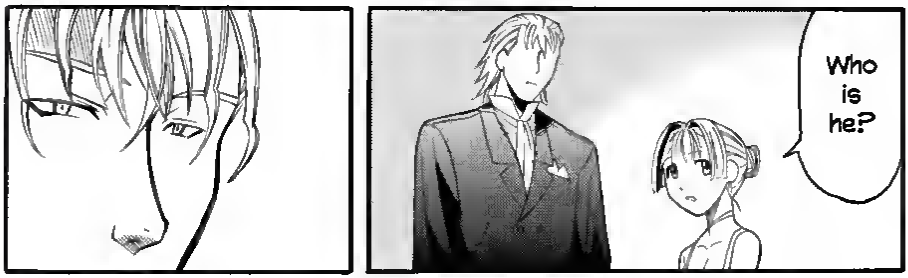

Your words are straight-forward.
There's no tinge of caicu-iation or sarcasm.
. . . . . .
I always found it strange.


RAISE

In fact, your words were so bland.
They were so plain... They didn't reflect who you are.

I did like what you just said!
You de-sire to win against other males, even those mentioned in conversa-tion!
Those were the most honest words from you tonight, Lionel Taylor.


I'm sorry to arrive so late.
あっはっはっ?
HA HA HA


Who is he?

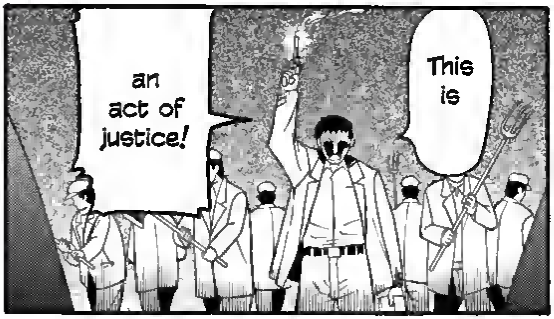
That's Lord Horst.
His genial and warm personality makes him a popular man.
The snow was terrible!
あっはっはっ
HA HA HA
Many have tried to persuade him to take on important political positions.
PEH
フェッ

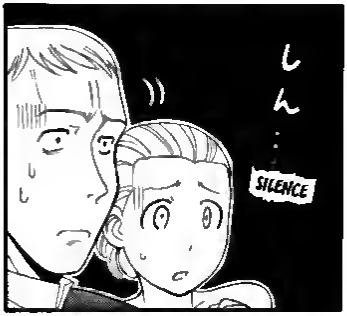
It's careless for an important man like him to venture out without guards.
What about you, my princess?
HA HA HA
I...
I can protect myself and my sisters.
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
CLATTER
Move away from the window!

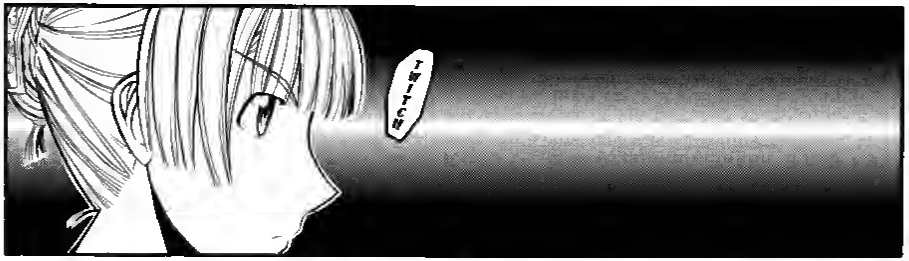
SHATTER
WHOOSH
SLUMP
ふら
uh…
SPLIT
SLICE

SLAMMM
AAH!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
KYAAAAAIIII
Commoners aren't allowed in here!!
Oh no!
Who are they?
KYAA
WAH!

BANG


This is
an act of justice!


しん…
SILENCE

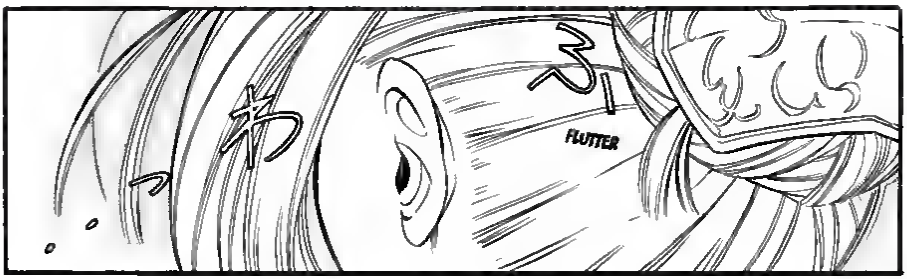

TWITCH

You'll get what you deserve!
Economic Director Lord Paulo!

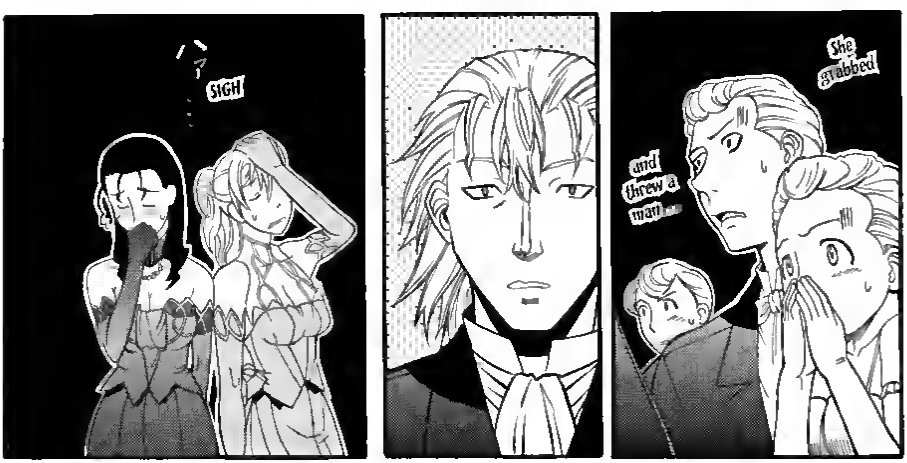
What?
MURMUR
There he is!
DASH
DIE!!
GRAB
DASSSSHHHH

TRIPPPP

UNH
BASH
ACK!
THUDD
SKIDD

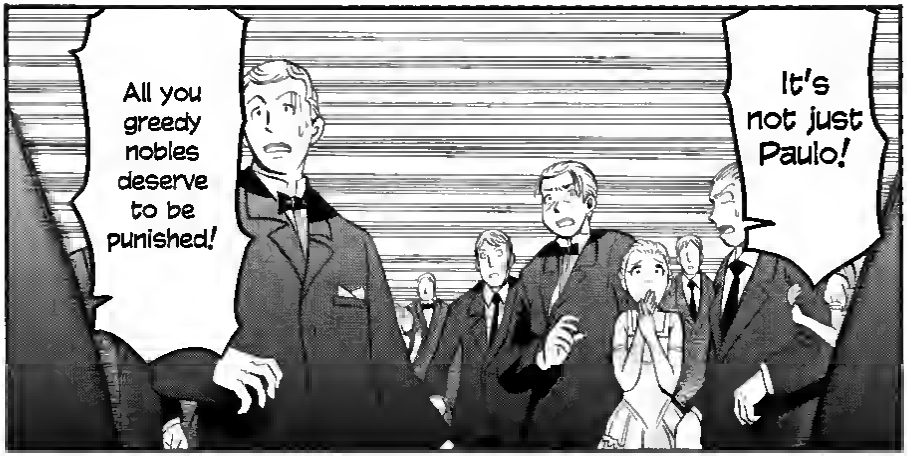

FLUTTER

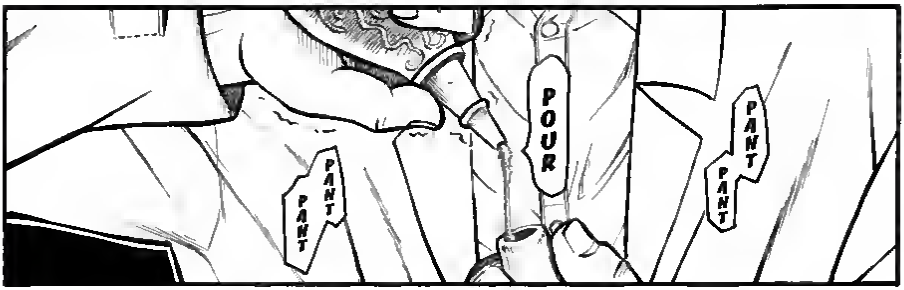
You said this was an act of justice.


SIGH
She grabbed
and threw a man

What, lil girl?
CLENCH
That piece of crap abused the power of his position
SHAKE
and stole a large amount of money!
He did it so he could wallow in obscene luxury!
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
Here's proof!

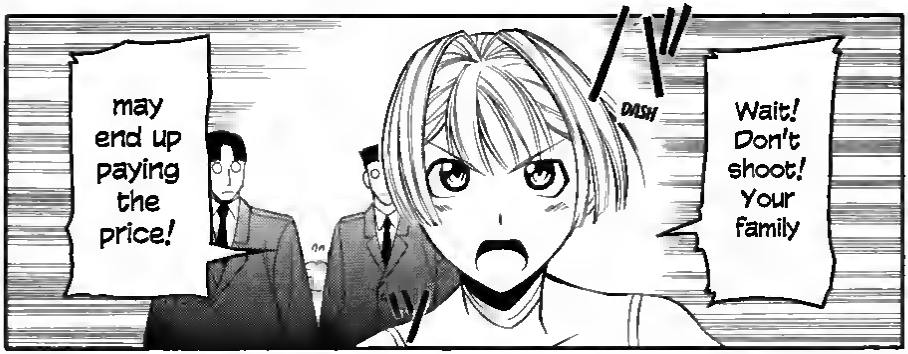
It's a lie!
They're just jealous!
Lord Paulo?
We have the right to be jealous, you slime!!
Yet, you waste and treat food like it's nothin'.
Our kids barely get to eat, so they get sick at the drop of a hat.
Most of them end up dead!!


All you greedy nobles deserve to be punished!
It's not just Paulo!


POUR
PANT PANT
PANT PANT

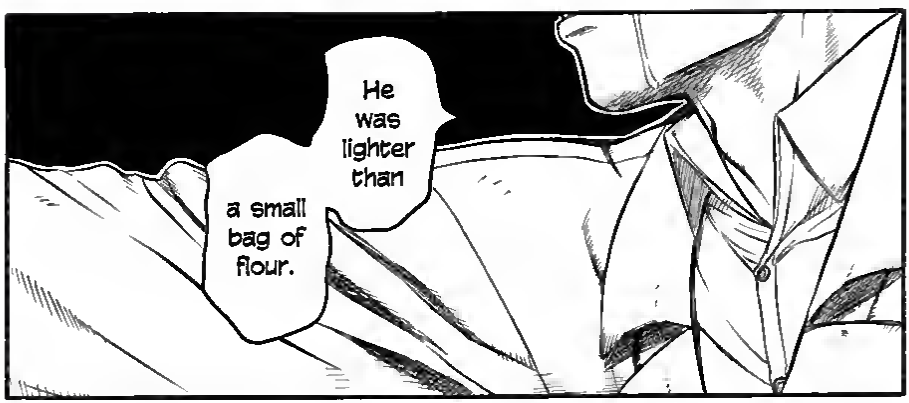
YELP
First, we'll deal with you, Paulo!
TWIST TWIST
CLICK
CLIK

You've consumed more food than
TCHKK
we could eat in our entire lives.


Wait! Don't shoot! Your family
DASH
may end up paying the price!

I don't have any.

My son died last year of a cold.
He was skin and bones when he died.


He was lighter than
a small bag of flour.

GRAB

I'm sorry.

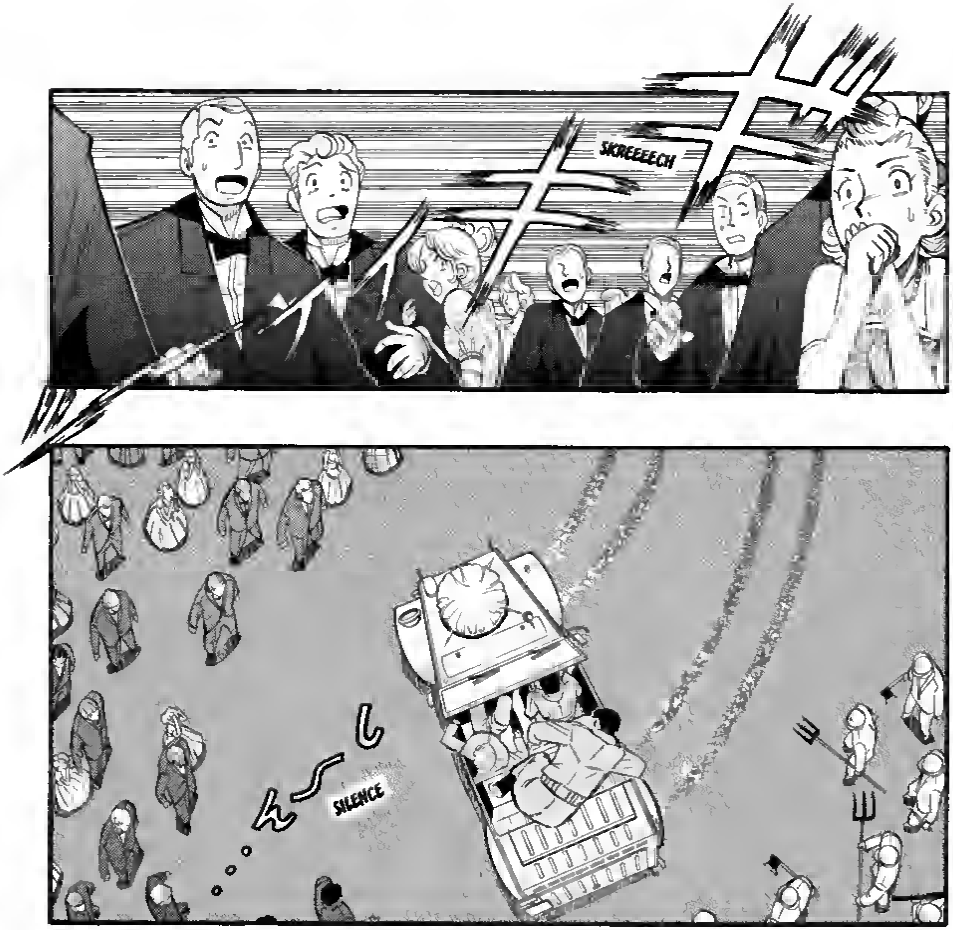
They want Paulo dead.
Once they kill him, they may turn on us.
Elis?
From there, have Lionel help you.
HOO
Solice and I'll protect you until you reach the exit.
Elis!
TUG
!
you need to enjoy life more as a woman.
It may be unfair, but

I won't leave.

My decision is firm.

VROOOOOOOOOOOOM
Alice!
What's that sound?
It's heading toward the entrance!
Drive on through, Mache!
No, Webner'll kick my ass!
Officer! Look out!

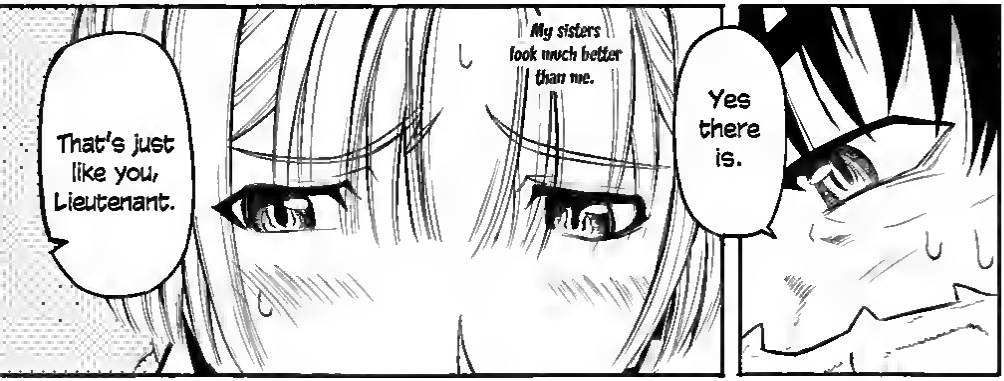
KERRRASH
Get outta the way!!!
SLIDDEEEE
The tires have no traction because of the snow!
TWIST
VROOOOM
SKIDDDD

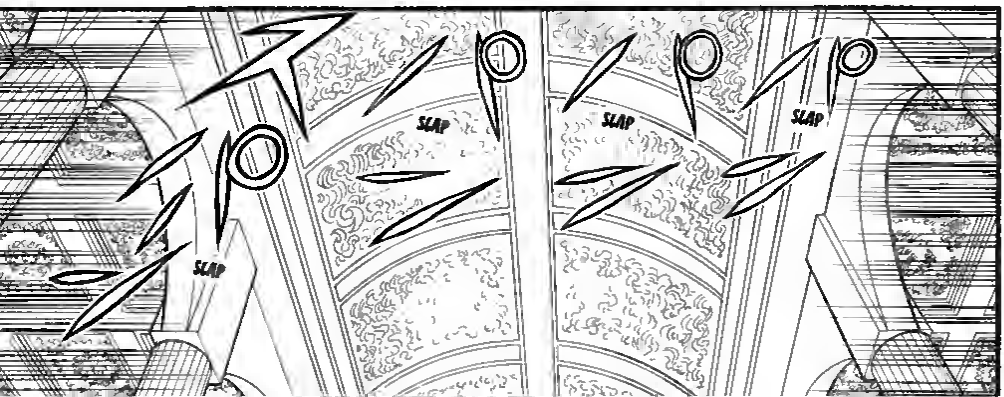

SKREEEECH
SILENCE

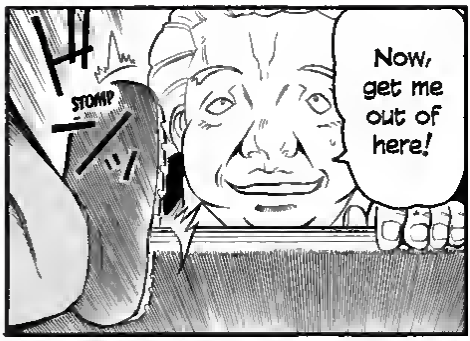
No.
We're fine—
PEEK
We didn't flatten anyone, right?

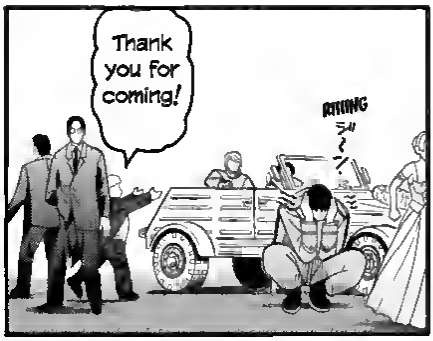
Uh...
GRIP
ギュッ
Um...
You look amazing.

What?
Amazing?
There's nothing amazing about this!
Oh!
COVER


My sisters look much better than me.
That's just like you, Lieutenant.
Yes there is.

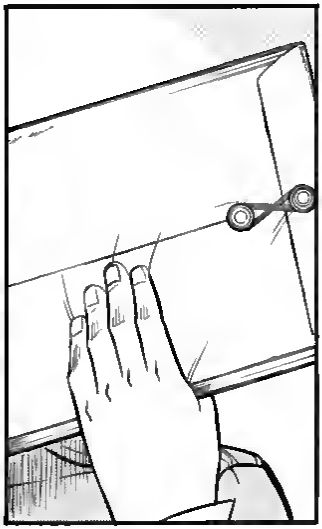

SLAP
SLAP
SLAP
SLAP


STOMP
Now, get me out of here!


Thank you for coming!
REVVING

We're not here to help you.
Just the oppo-site!

That damn docu-ment!
How do you know they're not fakes?
We're sure they're not



It's not forged.
One of them has the official seal of the economic director.
There are fifty copies of fifty pages.
Forty-nine of them are "copies."
As a result, all copies are real and fake at the same time.
One page of the original was included in every copy.
According to these,
last month, you stole seven million.
UGHHH!

SCRATCH
How can you tell just by looking at that document?
We're managing tremendous amounts of money.

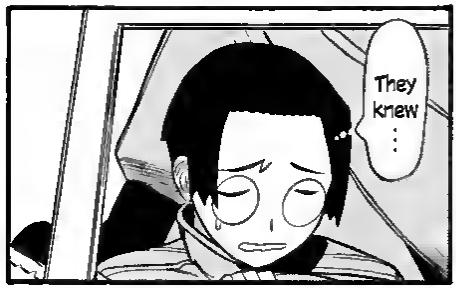
She's bad at simple additions, but she's a whiz when it comes to complex stuff.
Everyone's late!
WHOOOSH
Actually, we have someone who can.

You're from Section III.
DASH

So...
We can talk about this at our office.

I believe Section III doesn't have the authority to arrest.

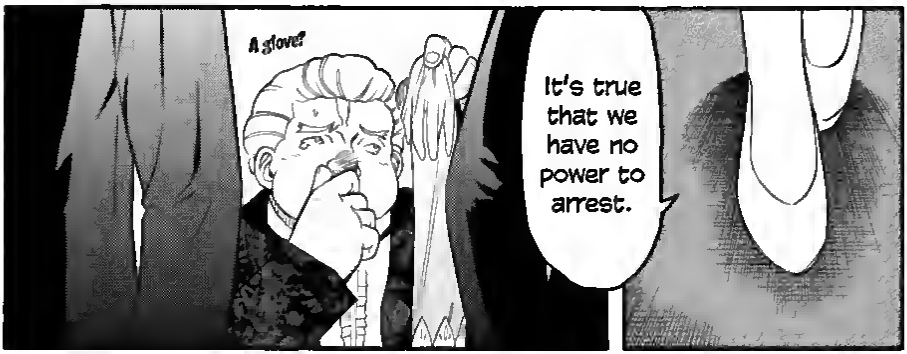
You morons!

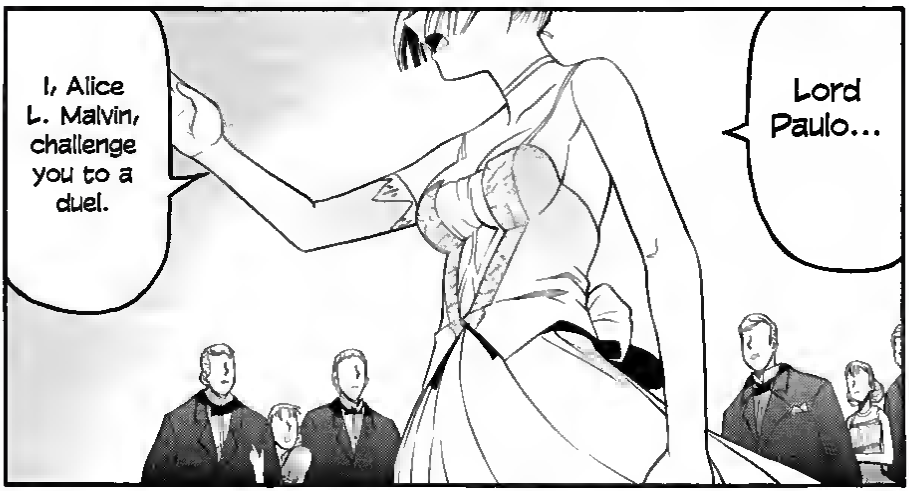

They knew...

to quell the mob!
We have to arrest him

KYAAH
JY-KKKK
Damn soldiers! Stay out of this!
Move!
We'll kill 'em all!
KYAAAH
Yeah!
Anything?
What can we do?
GAAAHHH!

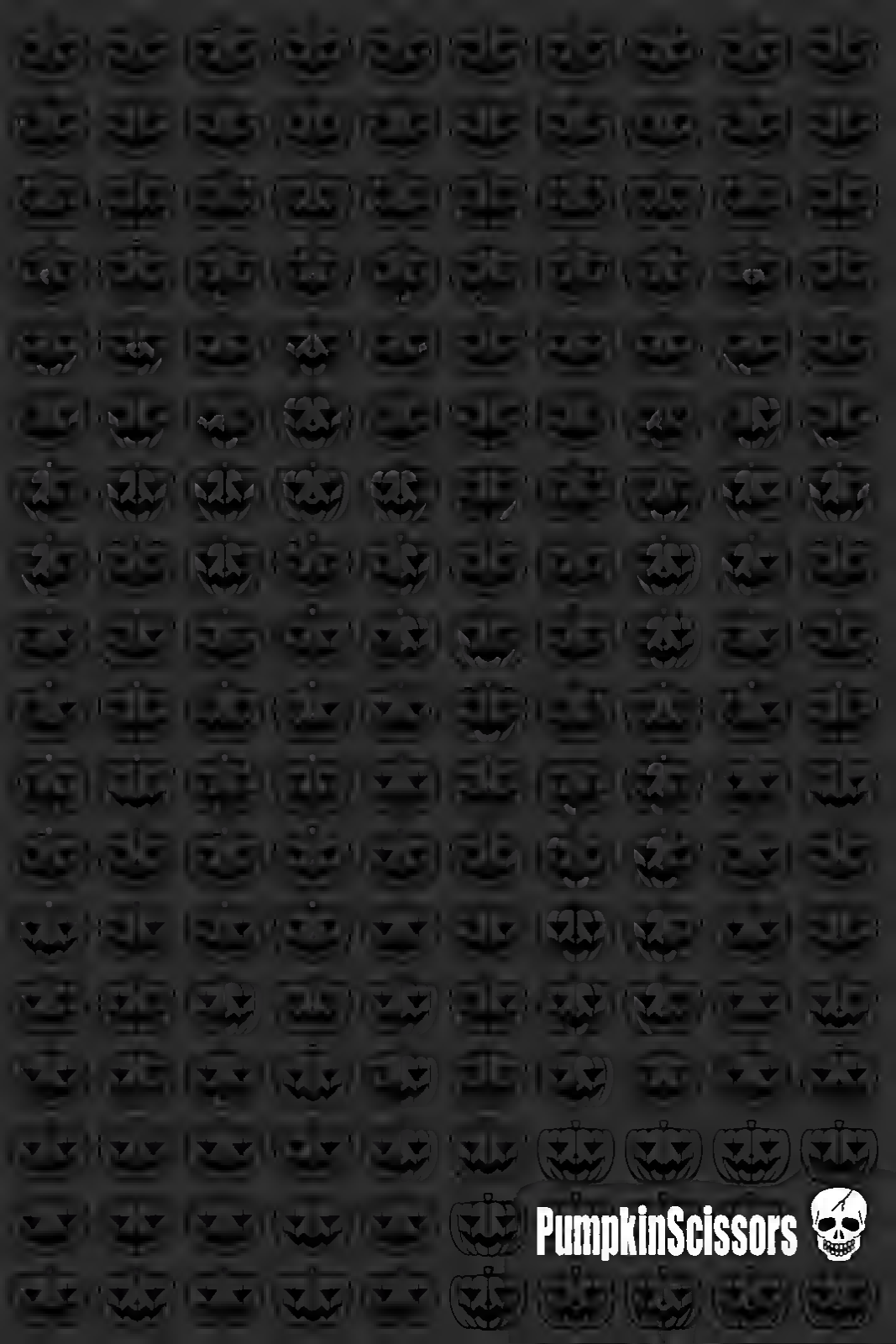
Silence!
SLAP


A glove?
It's true that we have no power to arrest.


I, Alice L. Malvin, challenge you to a duel.
Lord Paulo...

It's a challenge
from one noble to another!

PumpkinScissors


PumpkinScissors

I think we're done for now!
PAT
What...
What should I have done?
They're people we've sworn to protect.
They're not enemy soldiers.

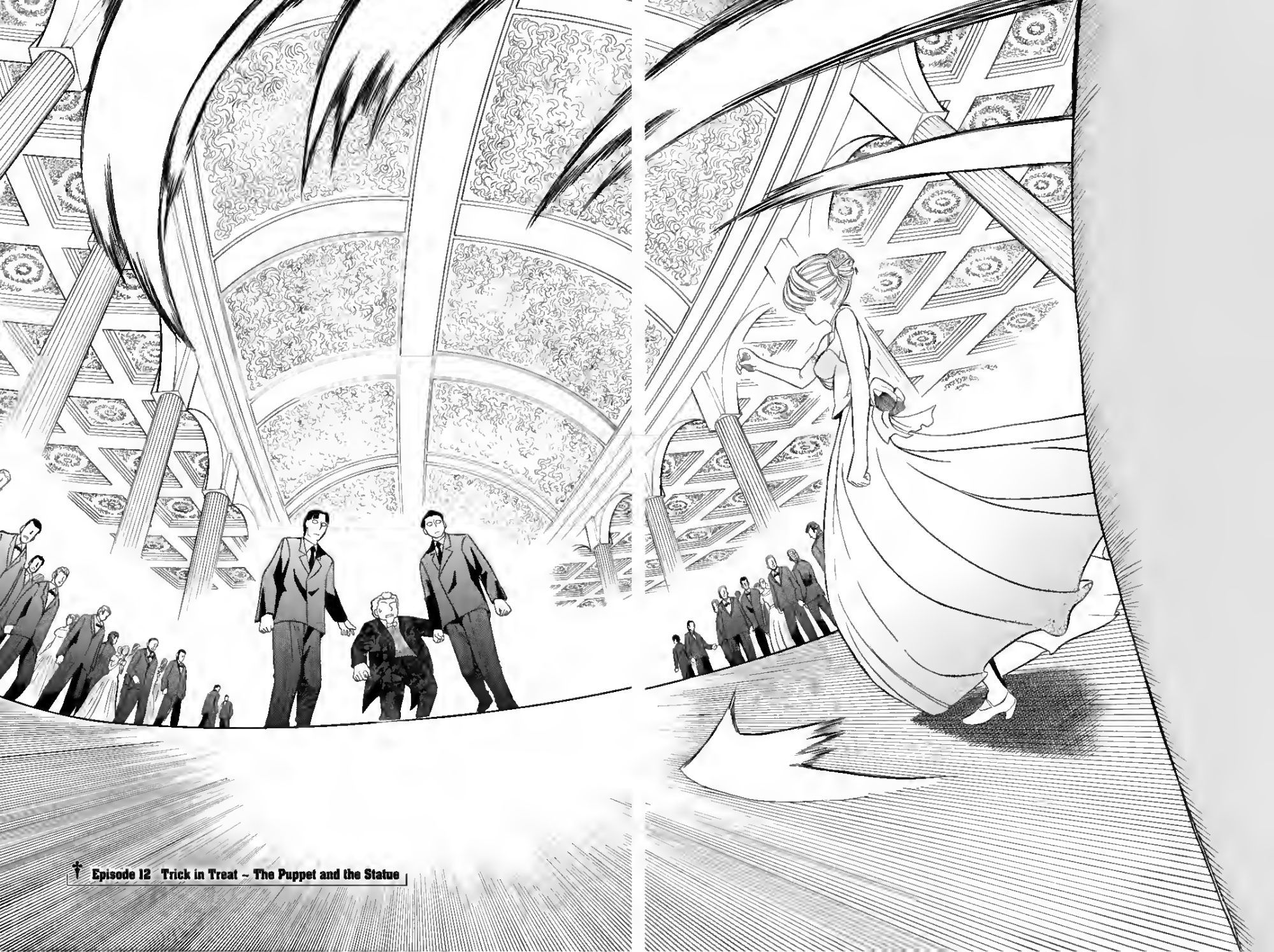
What was I to do!?
SQUEEZE
It happens all the time.
Me. Machs...
We've had to face that multiple times.
Hate, envy...
We admit we never felt the service end of a hammer.

In the chaotic atmosphere inside the cities right after the cease-fire...
Ditto for the lieuten-ant.
WHOOSH
We couldn't expect more than fists and rocks.
Soldiers who ruined their lives are suddenly spouting nonsense about reconstruc-tion.
The lieu-ten-ant...
What did she do?
How did she handle—

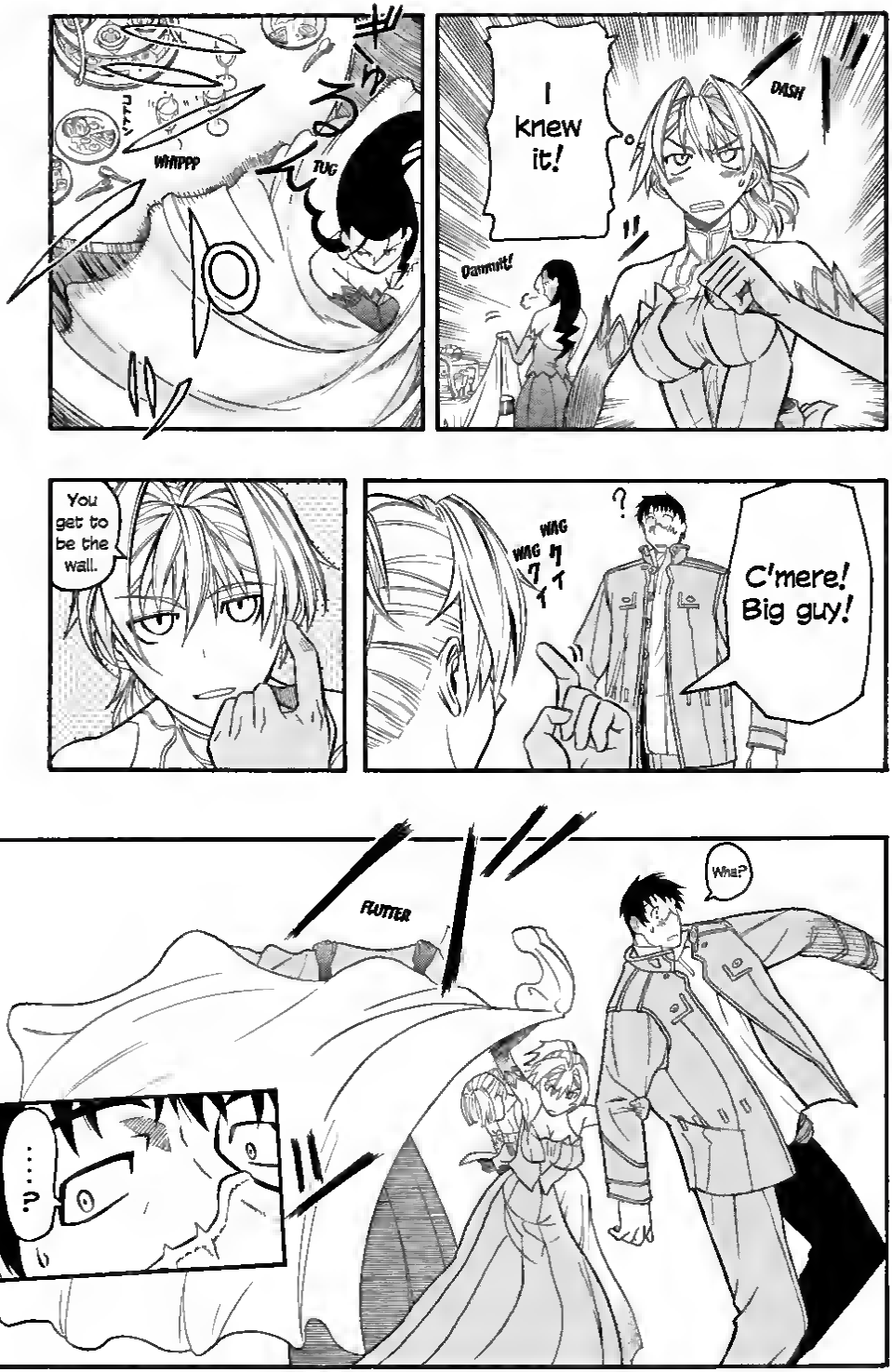
When you're stuck, you call for the lieuten-ant.
When you stumble, you call for the lieuten-ant.
Are you planning to do that your entire life?
The lieuten-ant isn't infallible.
If you're gonna be part of Section III,
then you'd better learn to think for yourself, and think on yer feet.

I don't know how...
I don't know what to do.
KYAAAAAAAAA
Kill 'em all!
Yeah!

In times of confusion,
the lieutenant always—



A... duel?
Arm wrestling? A game of tag?
HA HA HA
はっはっ
Great! What will be the rules?
ふぃわっはっはっ
FWA HA HA
RAISE
She didn't...
TWITCH
A sword-fight.


WHIPPP
TUG
I knew it!
DASH
Dammit!
You get to be the wall.
WAG
WAG
C'mere! Big guy!
FLUTTER
Wha?
.....?

?
TURN!
!
SWIPP
SWIP
KLIK
KLIK
I know we're supposed to wear the
She insisted on bringing the sword.

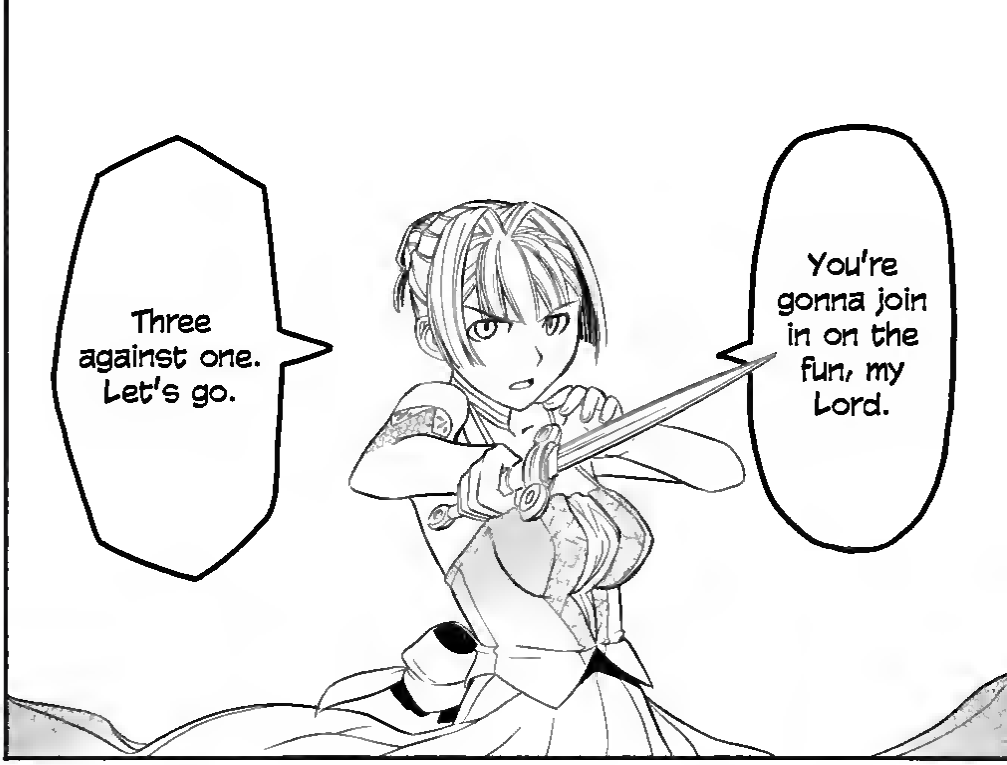
TCHHHHHHHHH
seal of the Imperial family at all times, but...
The lieutenant's always—
My beloved sis-ters...

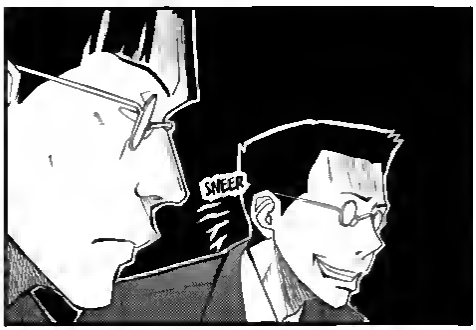
I may not be able
to protect your lives.
Thank you for waiting, Lord Paulo.
STOMP
B-BMP
B-BMP
B-BMP
What...?
GLISTEN
What the hell!?
Where did that come from?
JYCCHT

!
.....
PUFFT
These two men will be my swords.
GRAB
Fine!

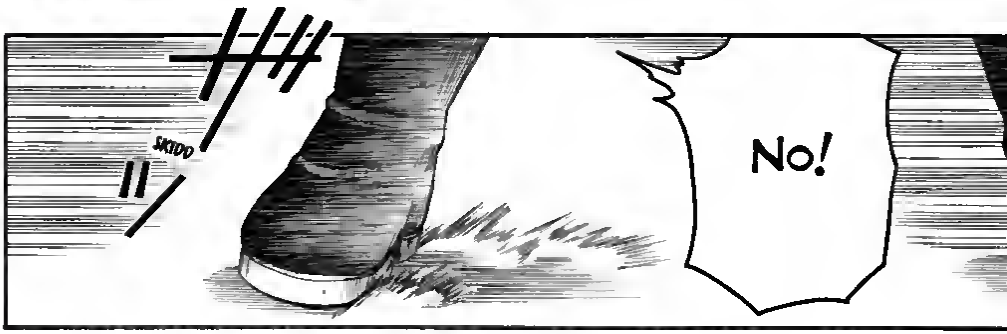
You must be kidding me.
Two against one?

What...?
D-BMP
D-BMP


Three against one. Let's go.
You're gonna join in on the fun, my Lord.


SNEER

Why—!?

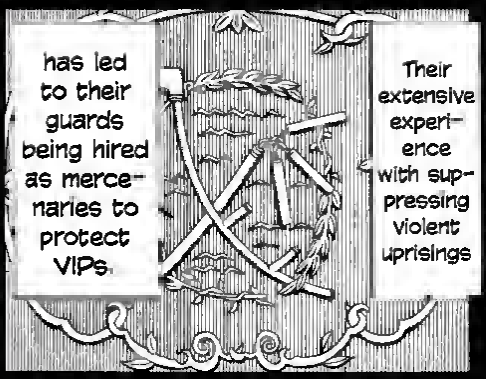

SKIDD
No!

Stop!
What do you mean?
FLUTTER
I won't let you fight anymore.
RAISE
Lieu-tenant!

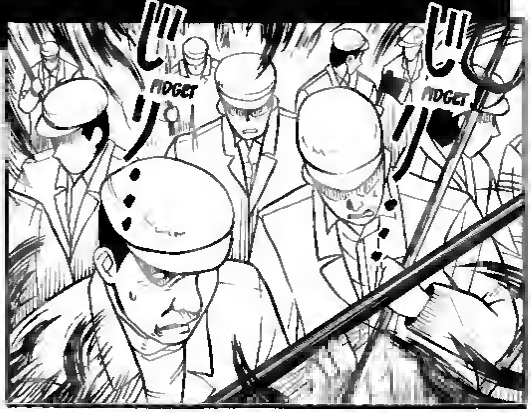
!?
FLIT
SLASH
Stand back, Corporal!
CRAKKK

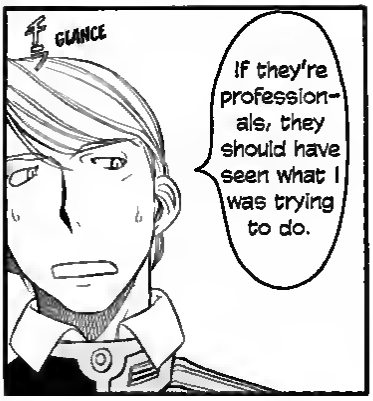
I've had enough of this jabberin'
JANGLE
SHUDDER
How 'bout three against two...
CLANGG
Brass round spec-tacles
I had my suspicions and I was right
A flail—!!

DA-DUNNNN
You're the Royal Guards of Lodelia!


has led to their guards being hired as mercenaries to protect VIPs.
Their extensive experience with suppressing violent uprisings

Lodelia's history is rife with peasant uprisings.
Lodelia? They're an agricultural kingdom, right?


FIDGET
FIDGET


GLANCE
If they're professionals, they should have seen what I was trying to do.

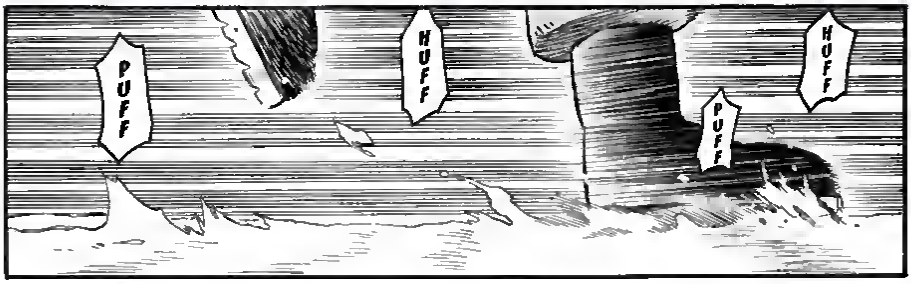
We're in a bad spot...
I don't know how we're gonna get out of this.
JANGLE
BASSHH
The table...
CRACK
SHUDDER
If I get hit with that thing...
SHEER

SLUMP
かくん
TREMBLE
SHAKE
TREMBLE
JANGLE
Keep moving.
Corporal!

KRACKK
LEAP
!
PANT
CRNCH
PANT
SKIDOO
Why are you avoiding me?
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
CACKLE

You have the strong voice of a leader.
The late king of Lodelia did award you
with the title of Noble Flamme for a reason.
DRIP
DROP
TUG
GLISTEN

That's unlikely...
Is the blade covered in poison?
A machete—!!
Unfortunately,
ズズ
SLIDE
that title was given to my grandfather.
As the third daughter of the Malvin family
STOMP
it is rather barbaric to be called
a noble.



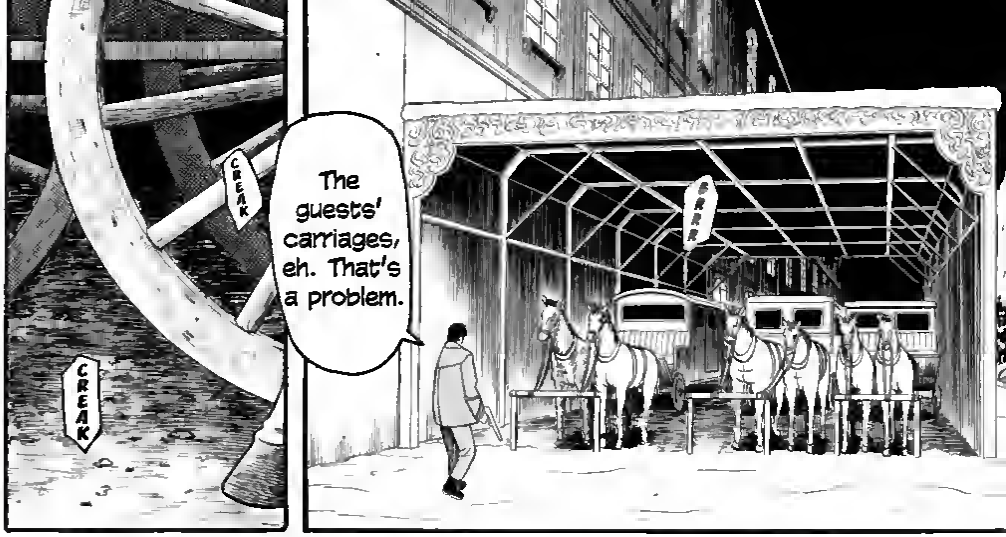
he's not going to risk his life.

If he's a hired hand,

he'll give up for sure.

If I point my gun at him,

Uh...
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
CHOMP
FLAIL
FLAIL
FLAIL
GAAAAA AAAAAAAAH!?
Horses!?
Uh...
BRRRR


CREAK
CREAK
The guests' carriages, eh. That's a problem.

Yo!
I shouldn't make you guys panic...

You think you're hiding over there?
Heh!
SWING

!
TUMP

CRACK
WHOOSH
SLAMM
KOFF

That probably tore up your stomach wall.
JANGLE
KOF
KOF
ACKKK
GAHH
BRRR
DROP
CLINK

PANT
Drop your weapon!
PANT
KOFF
PANT
PANT
PANT

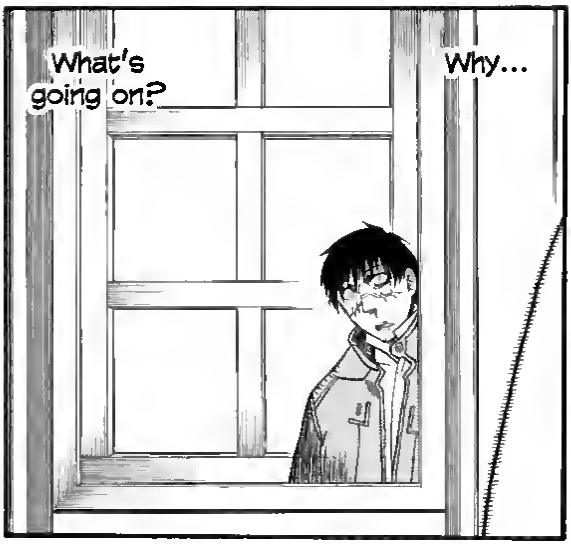
Guns don't effectively drive
fear into a crowd
for obvious reasons.

A blade or a gun...
STEP
The knife's more frightening to feel against your skin, right?
The pain caused by a gunshot is harder to imagine.
After all, very few people have been shot.
By using weapons that look painful, you keep large crowds in check.
Something that crushes or slices.
The more primitive, the better!
JANGLE
It's gotta sound painful.
JANGLE
The weapon's gotta be painful.
TUG

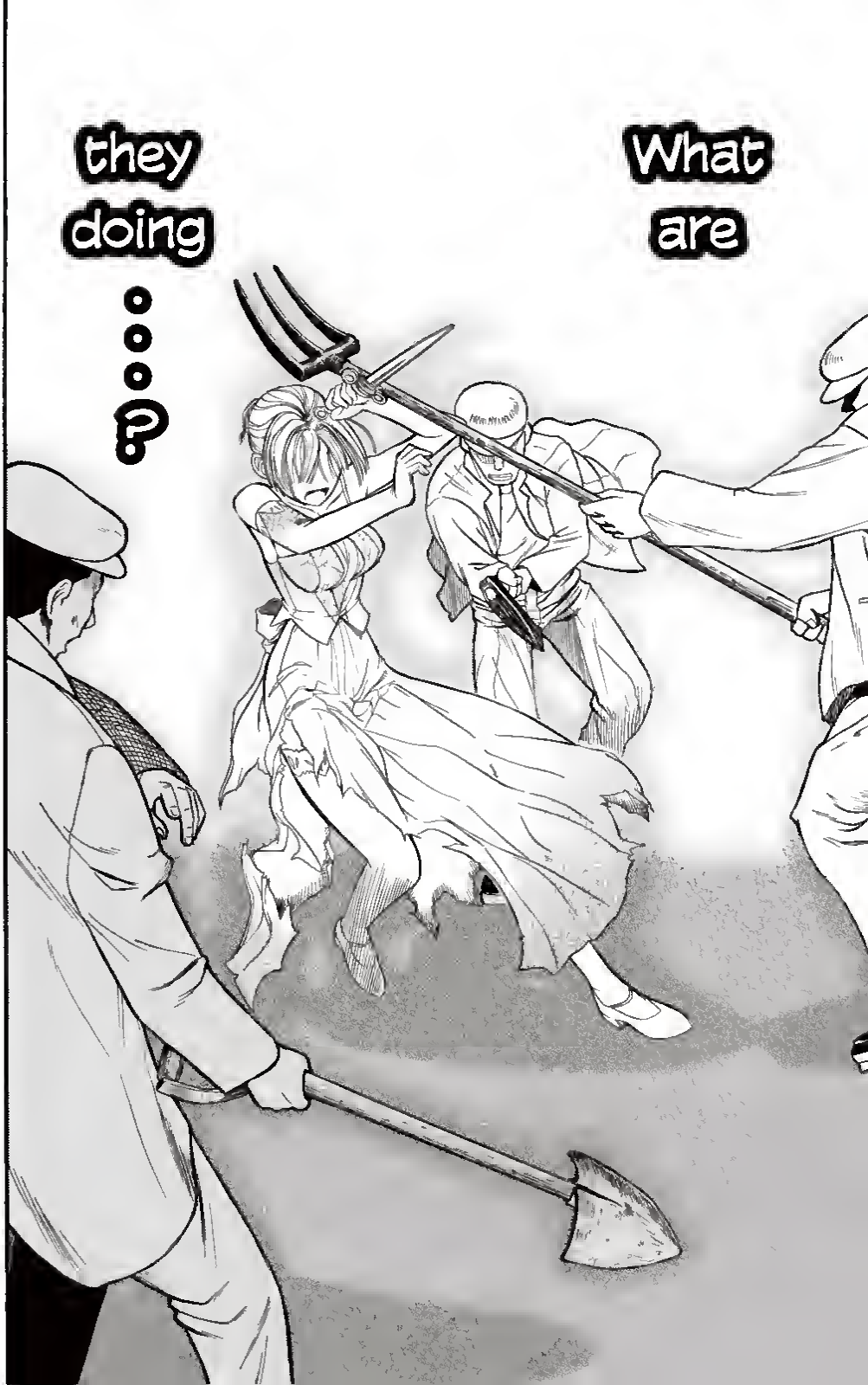
cowards won't be able to make a move.
JANGLLLLE
After you beat down a few into a bloody pulp,
.....
PUFF
SHAKE
SHAKE
TWITCH
HUFF
JANGLE
You're a god-damned coward,
soldier!
す...
TUG

PANT
よたSTAGGER
PANT
What do I do...?
PANT
PANT
PANT
よたSTAGGER
HUFF
KOFF
That sound makes my knees shake...

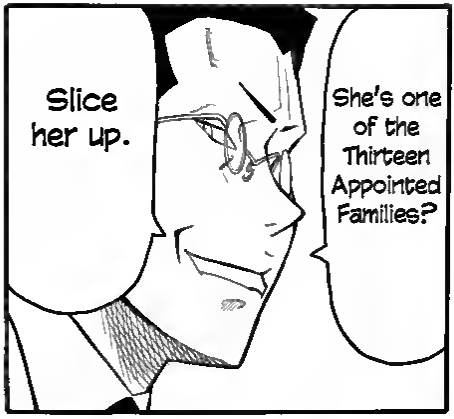
PANT
PANT
PANT
What can I...
よたHUFF
HUFF
STAGGER
よた


What's going on?
Why...

Wait...

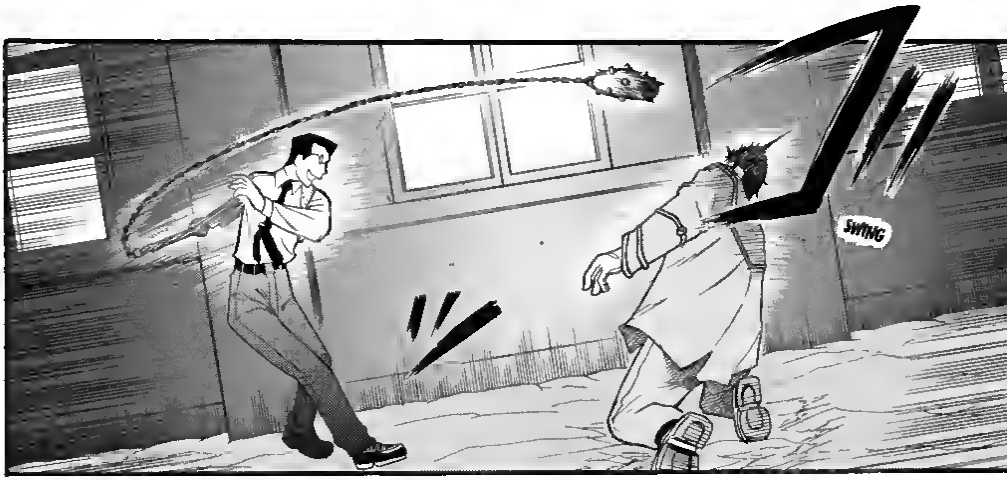

What are they doing....?

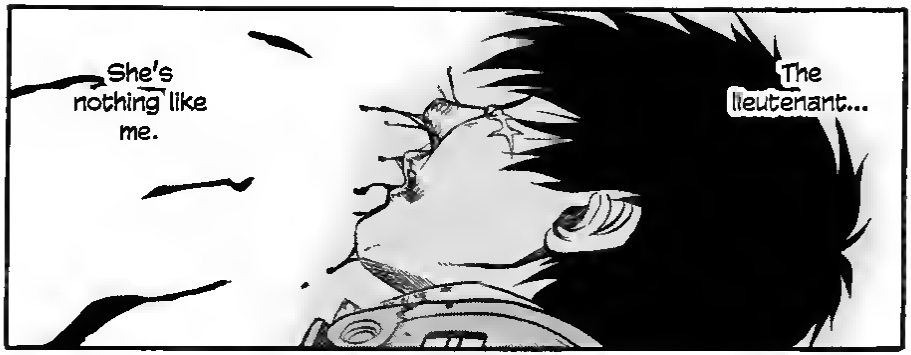
CACKLE
ケケケ
That woman's still alive?
SMASH
HEH
A duel? What a joke.
That little show ain't gonna stop a riot.
THUDD


Slice her up.
She's one of the Thirteen Appointed Families?

The... lieutenant...
No...
DRIP
DRIP

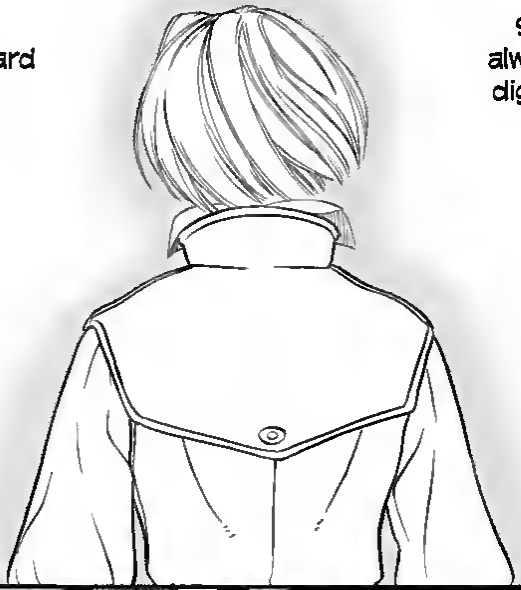
The lieutenant can't be wrong.
That should shut the peasants up.
STEP

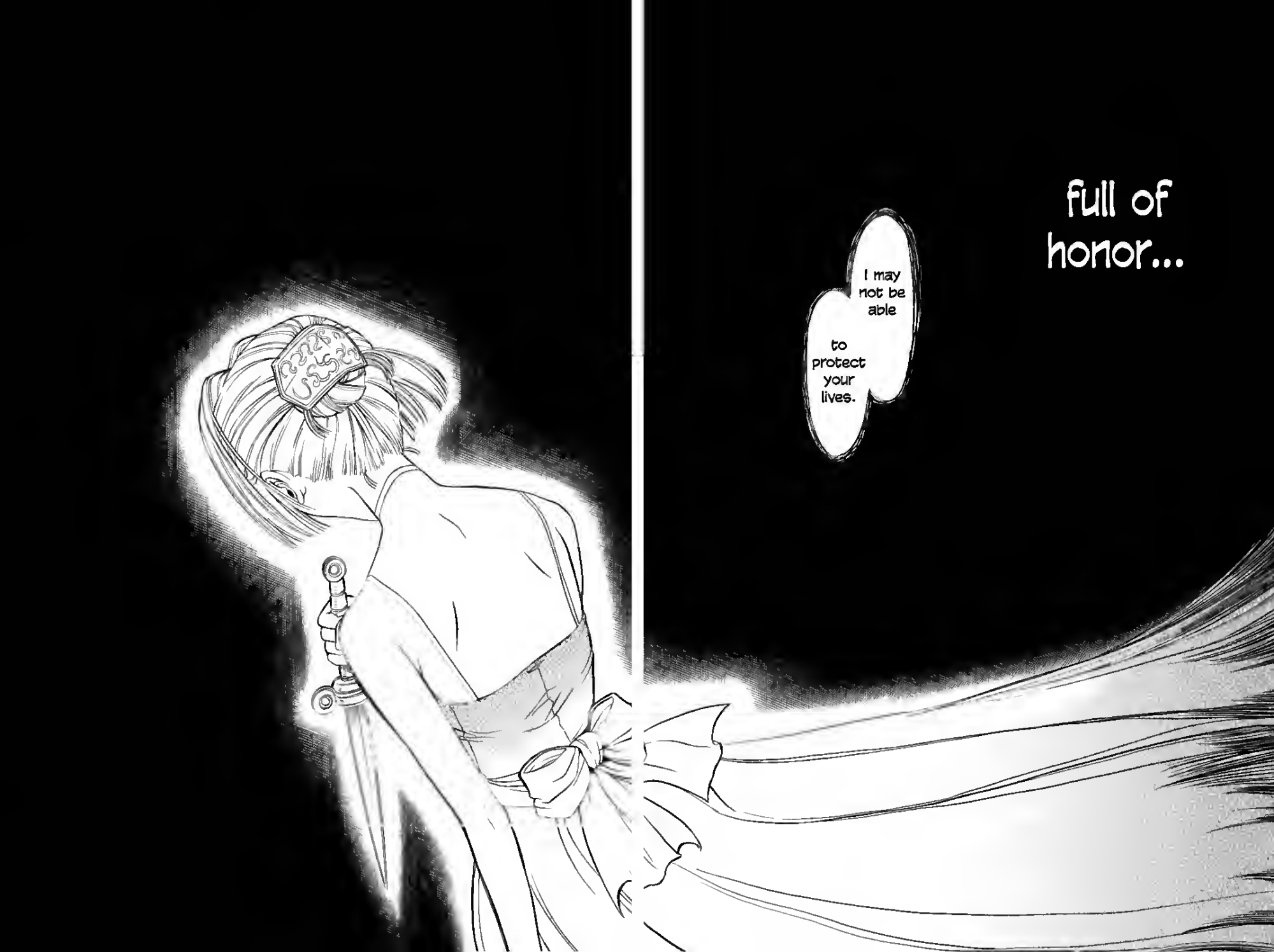

SWING



So straightforward and true...

She's always so dignified.




full of honor...
I may not be able to protect your lives.

!!
SLAM
I'm... stupid!
This huge hunk of flesh
DRIP DRIP
has been leaning against
the lieutenant's small back...

be crushing a woman's soft flesh.
After all, I'd rather
Die already, will ya?
Kill
Töten
sie....
O-RAH!
SQUEEZE
Even if I have to live through this nightmare over and over,
TUG
If all I can do is kill, that's fine.
FLASH
CREEEAK
I'm going to protect the lieutenant with everything I have!

That's the best way
to use this body of mine...
RRRRING

STEP
scaredy-cat!
Don't try too hard
JANGLE
TAP
What happened to you all of a sudden?
What the...
CLINK

BLAMMM
CLASH
G-TCHK
Guns are pretty frightening...
HA HA HA
HA
RRRRING
TCHK TCHK TCHK TCHK
RAISE
I'm
scared
SLIDE
SIZZLE

GRAB
TEAR
TEAR
C-TCHKK
WHOOSH
TAP
……
What on earth…
BRRR
BRRR

BRRR
BRRRR
I don't get you...
BRRRR
CLOMP
CREAK
CREAK
KTZ
Who the hell are you!?
BLAHHHHHH
What the hell's happened to you!
WHIMMY
JOLT

RIP
RIP
RIP
SNAPP
STEP
WRAPPPP
WAVER
Crap!
SWING
I can't take any more of this!
This is insane!
THUDDDD

TRAMPLE
DASH
!?
TWITCH
TWITCH
ビリ
ビリ

The gun-shots
Damn!
!!
DASH
DASH
GRABB
Hey...
SLUMP
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
GRIP
crazy!
Stop being

be
happening...

This
can't

DASH
DASH
DASH

Lemme go!
TRAMPLE
Lemme go, dammit!
TRAMPLE
Right now!
TRAMPLE
Let go! Let go!
CRACKLE
TRAMP
You...
TRAMP
TRAMP

DASH
DASH
This is your fault...
DASH
.....
DASH
DASH
It's ruined...
DASH
My right hand...
DASH
DASH
TUG
I can't believe this...
SOB
SOB
DASH
What am I gonna do now?
DASH
SNIFF
SNIFF
DASH

DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
What... are... you...
DRAG
DRAG
DRAG
!?
DRAG
DRAG
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
Please!
No!
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
Stop!
DRAG
DRAG
DRAG
Please stop!

AAAAA
DASH
DASH
DASH
DASH
HHHHHHHHHH
DASH
ビリビリ
RIP

ポタ
DRIP
ポタ
DROP

BRRRR
BRRRR

ビク
TWITCH
Ah... ACK
TWITCH
ビク

Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten sie
Töten....!!!
RUN

SHATTER

She would never ask for help.
So...
The harder things get, the more she isolates herself.

That's my job is to cover her back.

as a member of Section !!!!

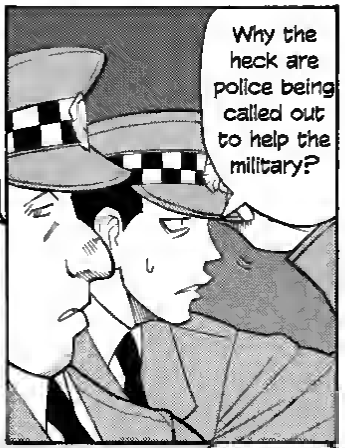
my most important role

#12/ The End

PumpkinScissors

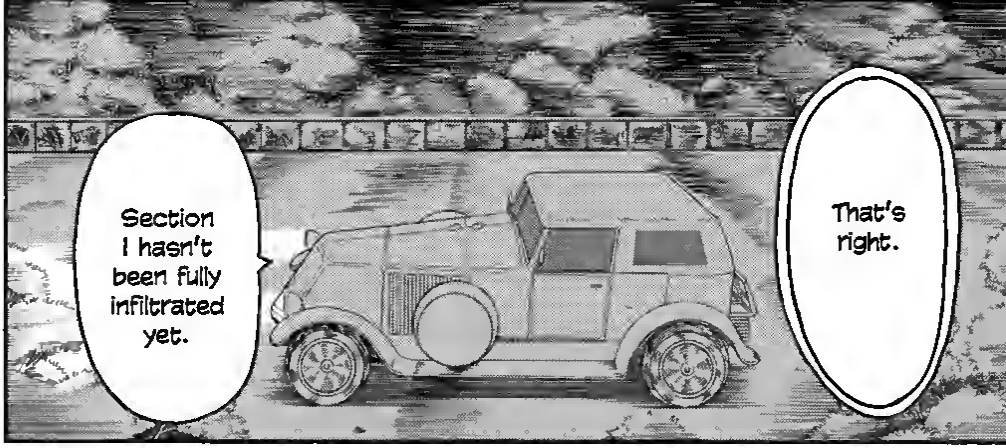
Dammit!

All members are given special authority.
Shhh!
They're called axe-some-thing.


Why the heck are police being called out to help the military?

That sucks—
VROOOM
As long as they claim "information control,"
they can take men from lower departments and mobilize them under their command.

Excuse me.
Let him pass.
Go ahead.
This area is closed to the public.
Oh, that car...
Was that high-ranking military personnel?
HAHA
VROOOM


Section I hasn't been fully infiltrated yet.
That's right.

He's just enjoying the thrill. I don't think he's taking this seriously.
That kid...

learn to hunt through
playing with their siblings.

Lion cubs

Lions kill only out of necessity.

As a result, they develop boundaries.

They don't just learn hunting skills. They're basically simulating the taking and killing of life.

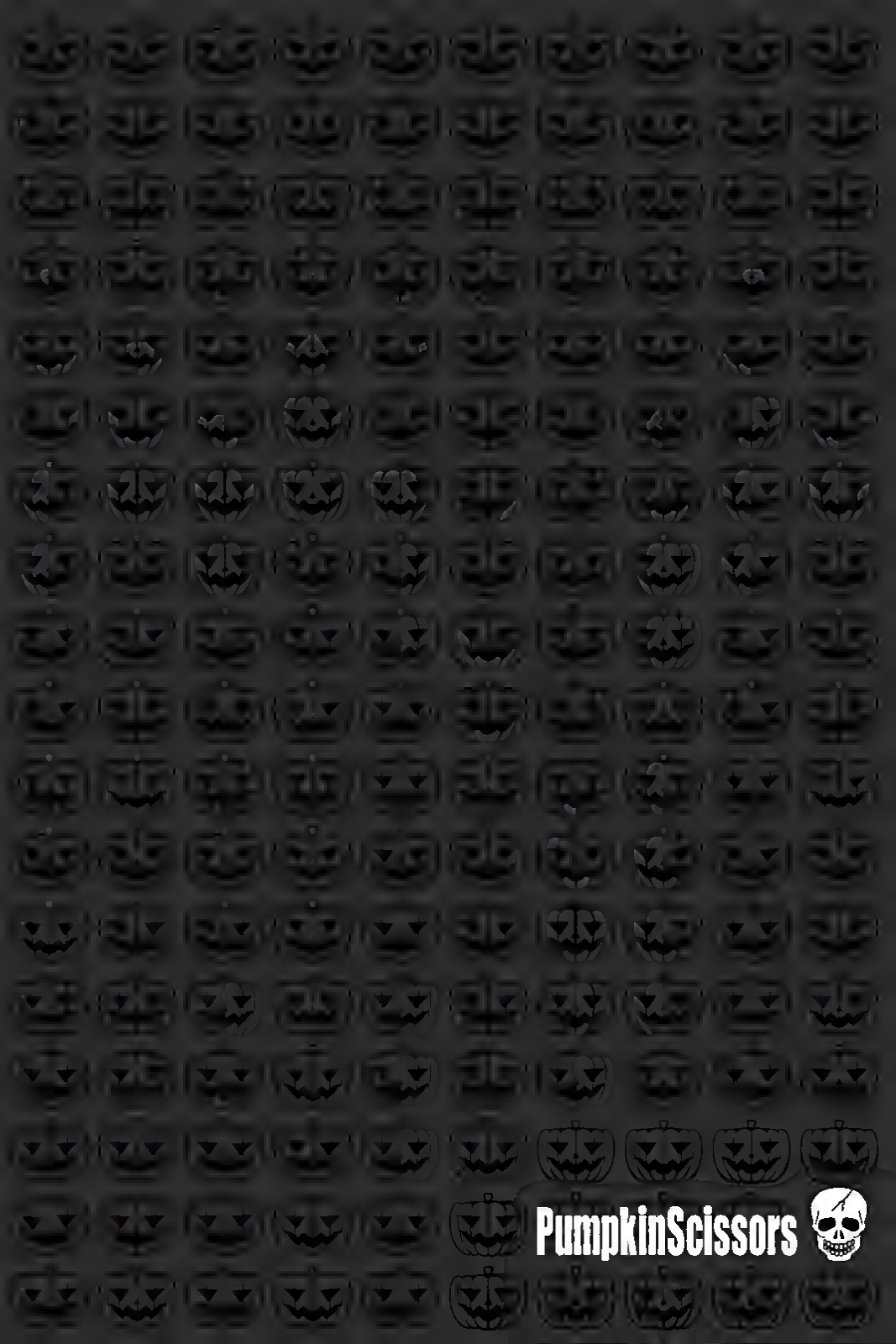
never had anyone to "play" with.

However, he

without ever having learned his boundaries.

He's grown up, yet still searching for a playmate

←NEXT!

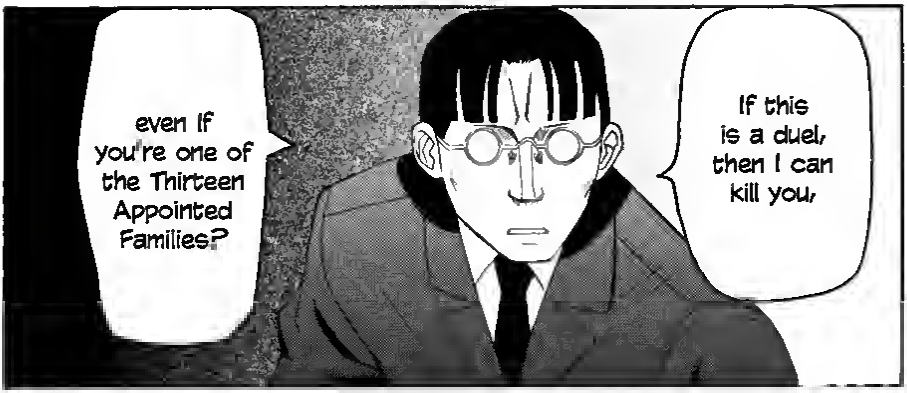

PumpkinScissors

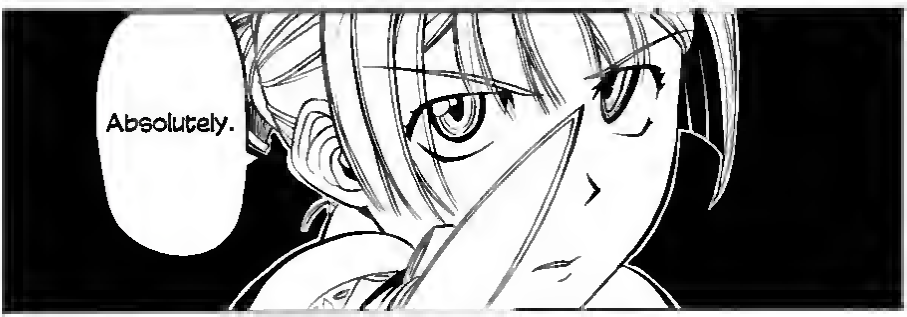
There is something very lonely about...
...being a nobleman.

Keep moving, Corporal!
Noblemen must

protect
their
people
from
external
threats!
In order

to govern people, noblemen must...

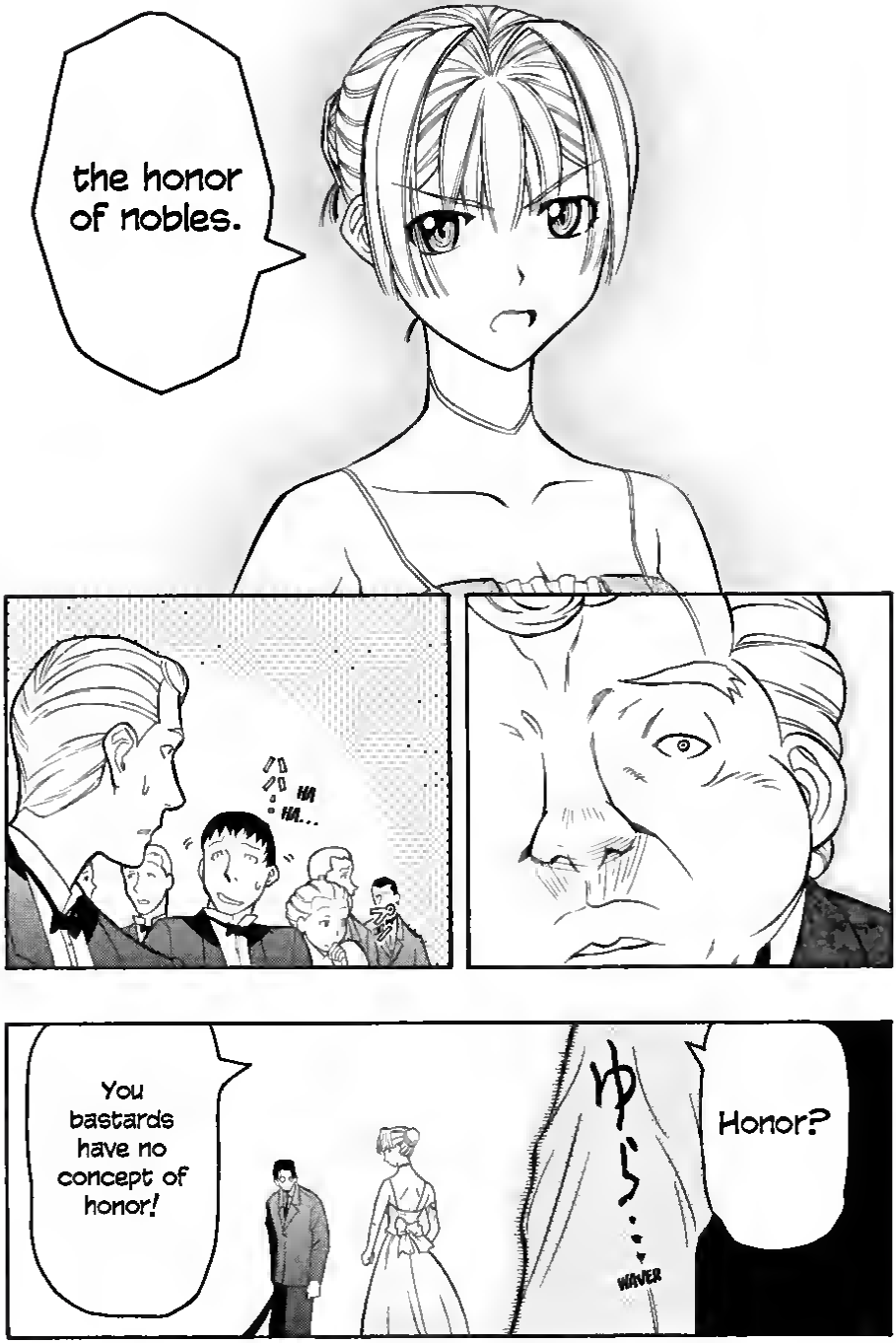

even if you're one of the Thirteen Appointed Families?
If this is a duel, then I can kill you.


Absolutely.

What are you fighting for?

...
Any other questions?

I'm...
fighting for...


the honor of nobles.
HA HA...
You bastards have no concept of honor!
ゆら…
WAVER
Honor?

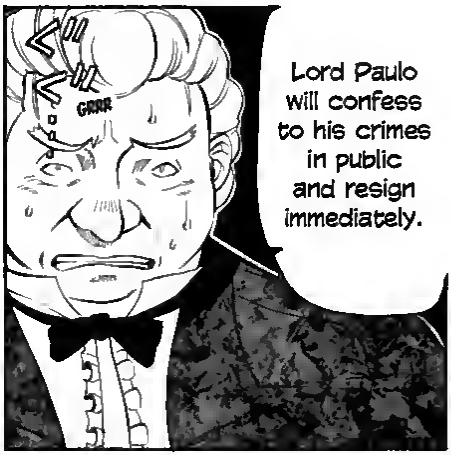
You think that's gonna quell our anger!?
You pretend with this bullcrap of a duel...
No!
JOLT
Best to take some jerks to the grave with us!
CLICK
CLANG
We're gonna be executed for this, anyway!
TOK
Can you wait for just a little bit?
It's too late to beg...
TOK
TOK

What?

He's an aristocrat!?
Lord Paulo's guilty. These documents prove that.
So,

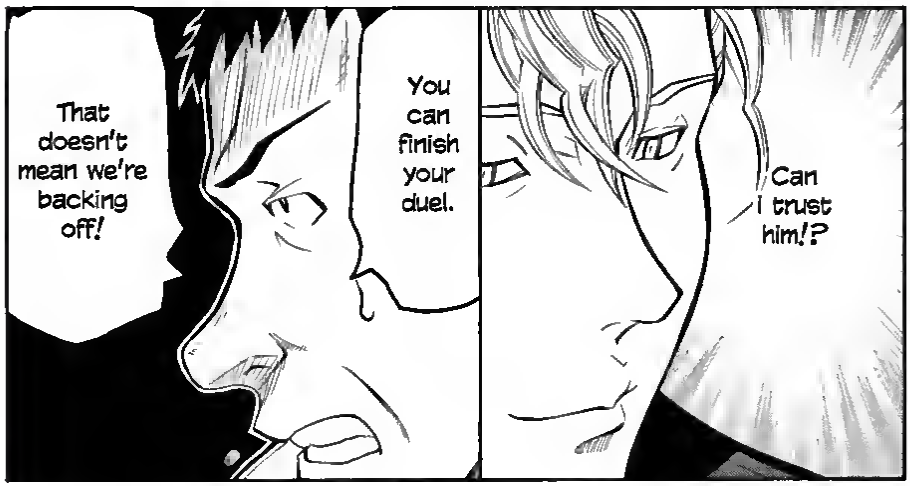
RAISE
if this woman wins the duel,

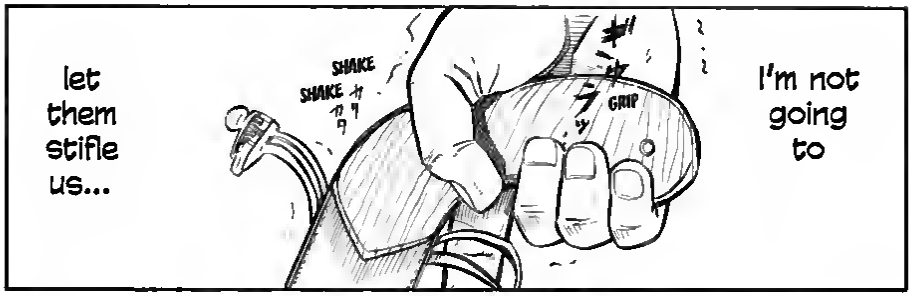
We won't be charged...?
You're defending the law. I'll guarantee that you won't be charged with a crime.
MUTTER

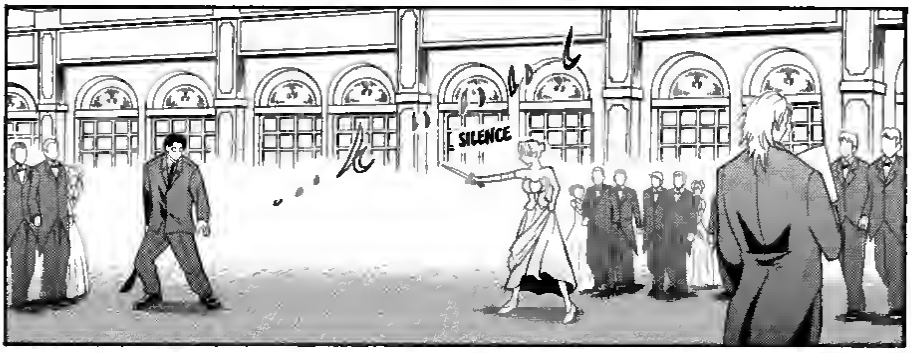

GRRR
Lord Paulo will confess to his crimes in public and resign immediately.

What if we win?
Lord Paulo can do as he wishes.
He could deny and cover up this incident.
He can attempt to escape this room.
In that case, we're back to the original plan.
There will likely be a bloodbath.
SHUDDER
What do you think?
MUTTER
It's not a bad proposition...
MUTTER
It's a win-win offer.

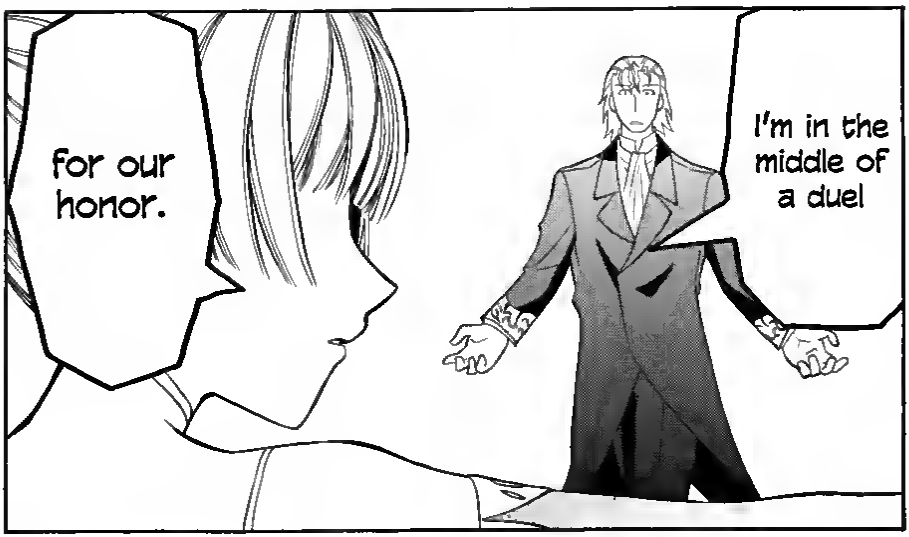
We'll live!!
our lives will be spared, right?
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
If she wins...
WHISPER
What should I do?
What do we do?


That doesn't mean we're backing off!
You can finish your duel.
Can I trust him!?


let them stifle us...
SHAKE
SHAKE
GRIP
I'm not going to


SILENCE

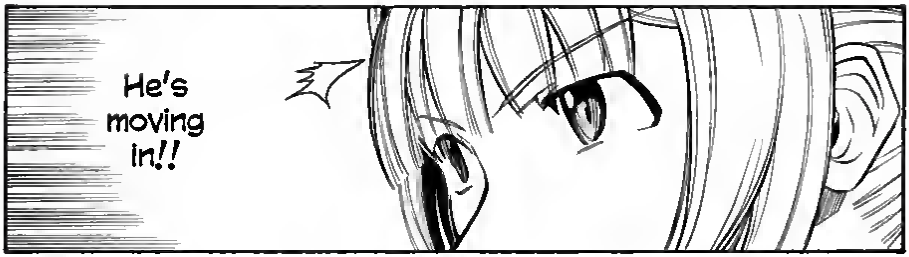
My princess,
fight to your heart's content!
HEH
TOK
Stand back!

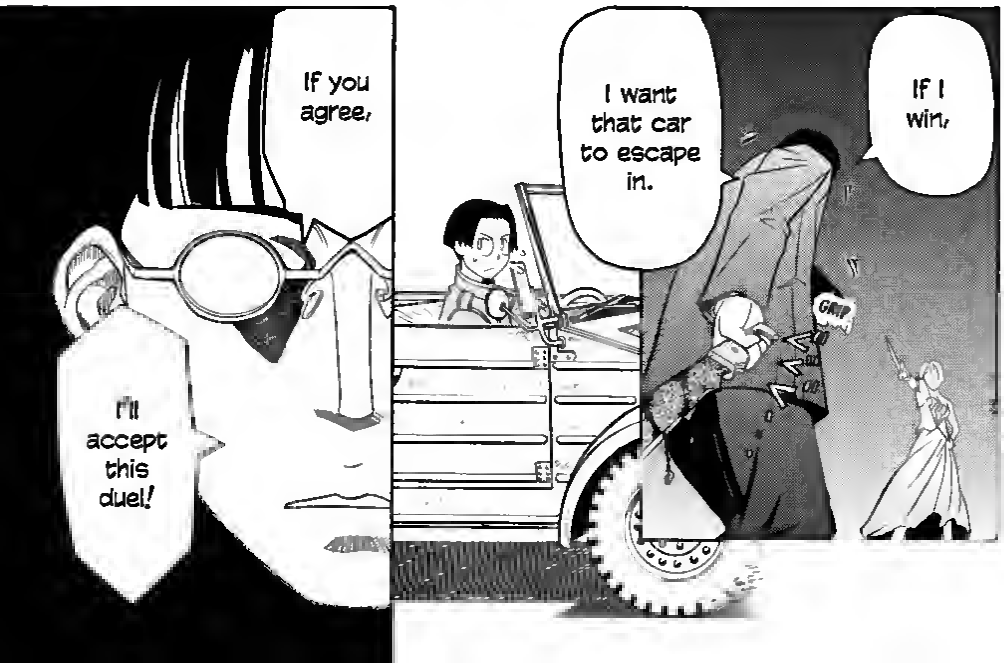

I'm in the middle of a duel
for our honor.

How dare she talk to him like that!
UGH!
He was trying to help her!

She's...
I know.

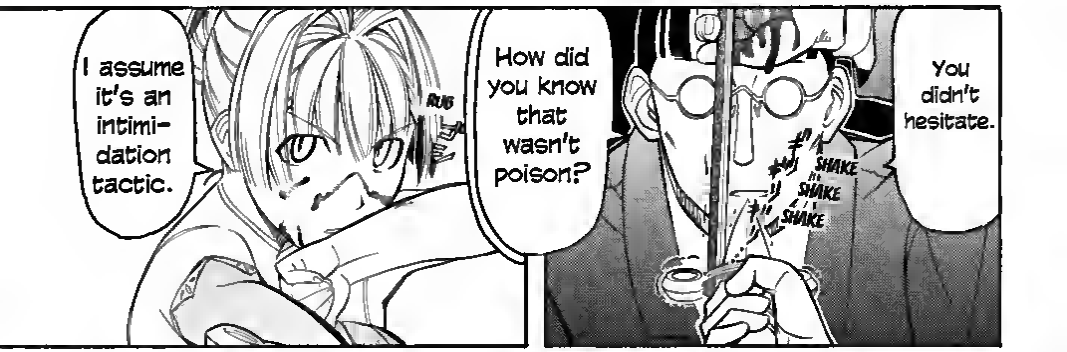
ベッ
GRAB
DRIP
I want to add something.
STEP
す……ニ


He's moving in!!


If you agree,
I'll accept this duel!
I want that car to escape in.
If I win,
GRIP

STEP
SLASH
DASH
SPLAT
SPLAT

KLASHH


You didn't hesitate.
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
How did you know that wasn't poison?
I assume it's an intimidation tactic.
RUB

Besides, you wouldn't use poison that could splash onto your employer like that.
SNIFF
Smells terrible, no?
TWIST

This mud is from there.
Southern Lodelia is still filled with untamed rain forests.
DRIP
DROP

I couldn't get away from the smell of decaying plant matter covered in mud...
I was trained in that hostile environment.

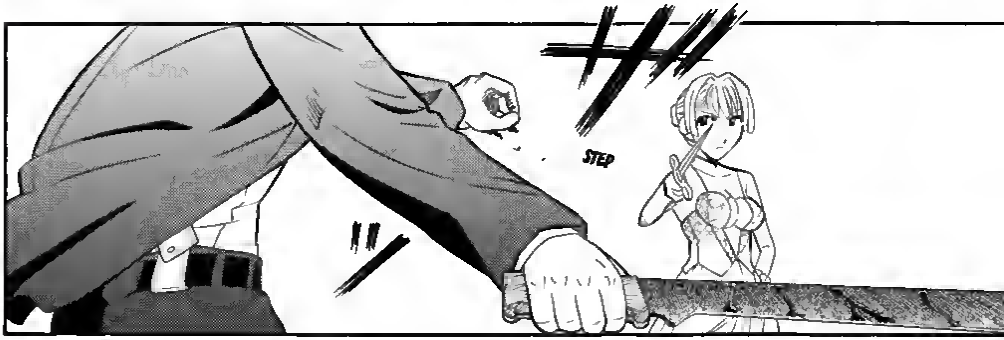
SLITHER
This mud
SNIFF
SLIDE
This smell
reminds me of that green hell.

SPLAT
marks my territory!
SWING

Inside my territory,
This room could be full of rioters.

Weeds...
SMEARRRR
DRIP
DRIP
I can treat them like weeds in the forest.

need to be de-stroyed
with my machete.

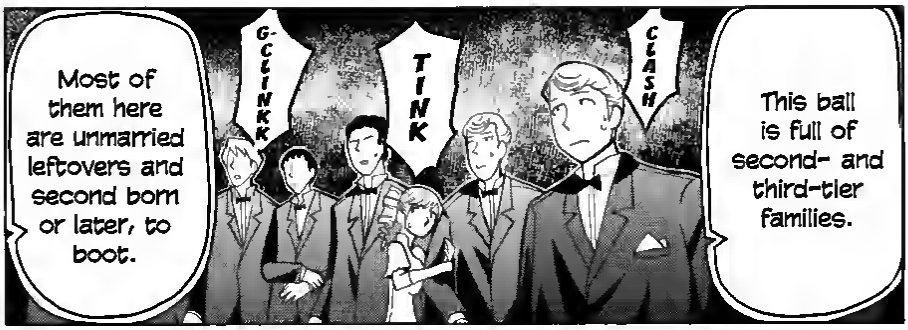

STEP

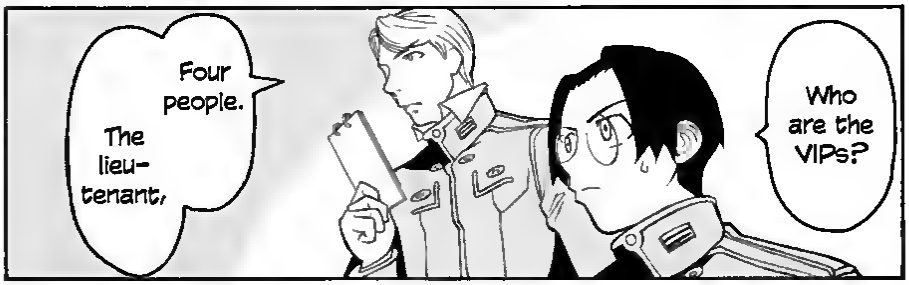
LEAP

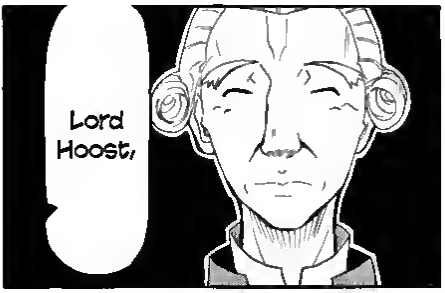
KT-CHHHH

Crap, can she beat him?
STEP
CLANG
CLASH
CLASH

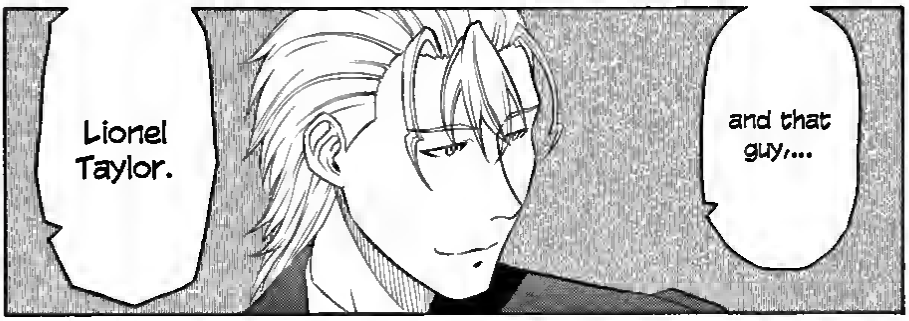
I looked it over.
Yeah.
The waiter had the guest list.
Oreldo, did you find any-thing?

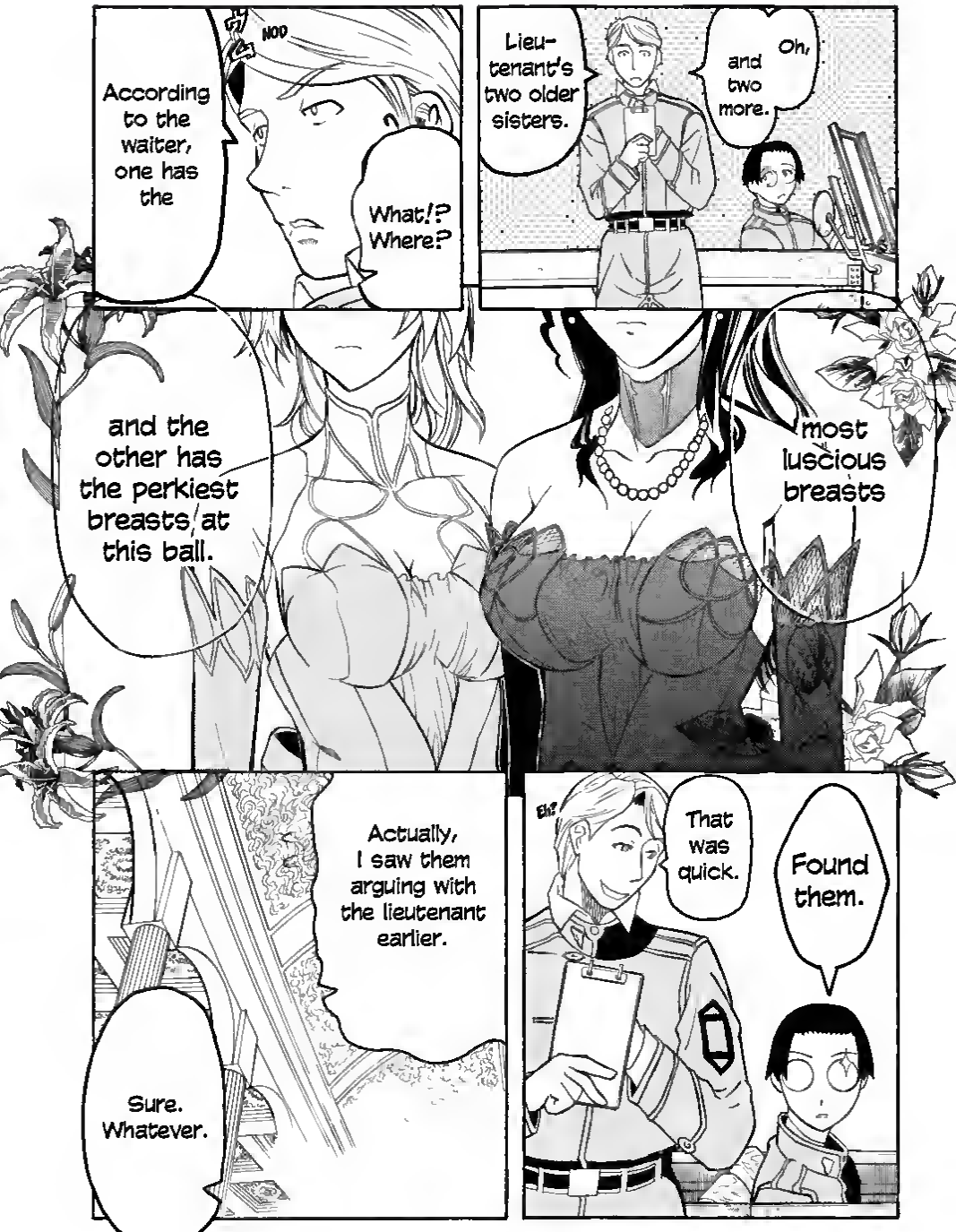

Most of them here are unmarried leftovers and second born or later, to boot.
G-CLINKK
TINK
CLASH
This ball is full of second- and third-tier families.

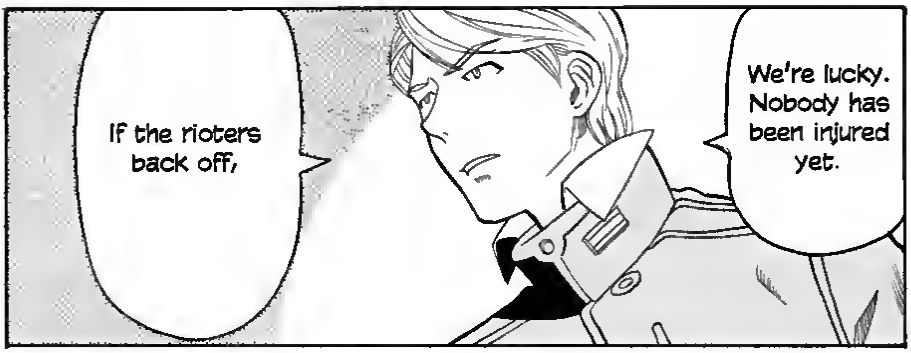

Four people.
The lieu-tenant,
Who are the VIPs?

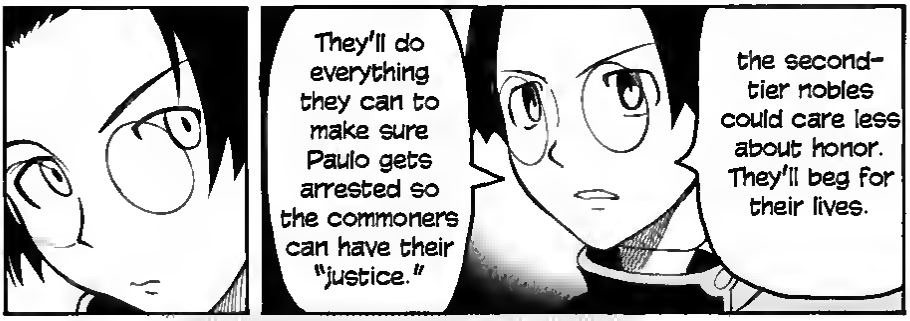

Lord Hoost,

Lord Paulo,


Lionel Taylor.
and that guy,...


Found them.
That was quick.
Eh?
Actually, I saw them arguing with the lieutenant earlier.
Sure. Whatever.
and the other has the perkiest breasts at this ball.
most luscious breasts
According to the waiter, one has the
NOD
What!? Where?
Lieu-tenant's two older sisters.
Oh, and two more.


If the rioters back off,
We're lucky. Nobody has been injured yet.


They'll do everything they can to make sure Paulo gets arrested so the commoners can have their "justice."
the second-tier nobles could care less about honor. They'll beg for their lives.

Lionel Taylor's very sharp.
He's stemmed the
Nah, he's clueless.
massacre with words alone...

These men aren't going to lay down their arms
because their lives will be spared or justice will be served!
It's not just about justice.
It's not just about the poverty they endure.
If they could cheat once in a while...
If the nobles had to endure poverty like they did...
What these men hate is

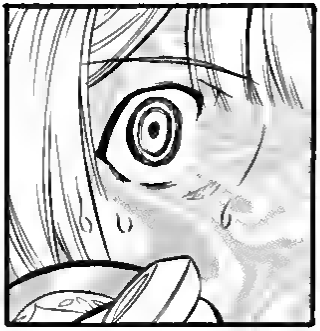
the disparity within society.
That's not going to be resolved with a duel.
I told you. There's no stopping this.
Don't shut off the engine, Machs.
ボソ ボソ MUMBLE MUMBLE
CLINK
KTING
CLASH
CLASH
GRIP
CLINK
Things can turn ugly real quick.

CLANKING
STARE
He blocked me again!
UNH!
DRR
KTCHNK
PANT
PANT
PANT
He only sees it as an obstacle to avoid.
He doesn't see my blade as a deadly weapon.
There's no burden in his breath or mind...

if he sees me as another weed...
It's as
.....!!
SHUDDER
SLOP
It's starting to play tricks on my mind.
The slippery sensation underneath my feet... The stench of the mud...

My footing is secure—
I have solid ground underneath my feet.
This is a ball, not the rain forest!

When what you smell isn't what you see...
Confusing, isn't it?



I'm used to it.

My footing is secure!
SMUSH
SMUSH
I'm at the ball!
GLANCE
!?
JERK
SLASH
SLOSH
SLOSH

STOMP
ガクーン
JOLT
JOLT
Dammit
RIP
TUG
TUG
My thin blade won't withstand the heavy blow
of the machete!

SLIT
SWINGG
!
RIPPPPP

You're not upset?
No. Besides,
STOMP
I know she did that
because she had no choice.
the dress is in the way of
what she needs to accomplish right now.

Stop! One false move and you'll set off a massacre!
Oreldo, we—
GRAB
They're about to—
Crap! I've been paying too much attention to the duel!
WAVER
JOLT

JOLT
No! Don't kill him!
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
Uh...
Hhhhh
Die, Paulo!
LEAP

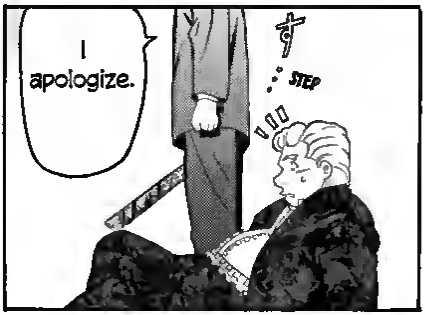
SHOVE

She saved me...

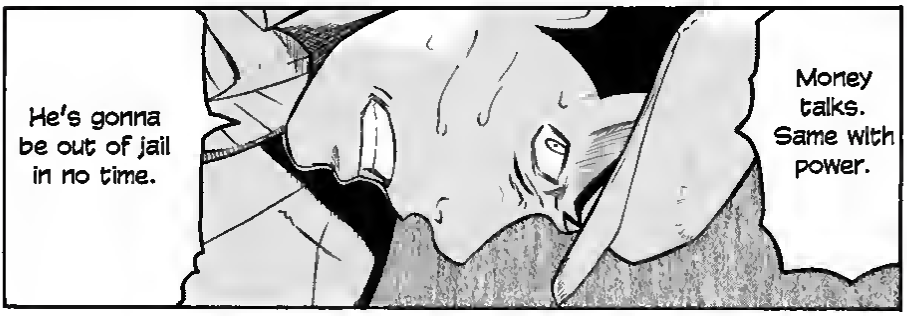
I thought she wanted me to fall...!?
SLICE
SWING
Outta my way!
DASH
SHOVE
How dare you disturb a duel!
GRASP
TWIST

We can't wait around for your stupid game to end!

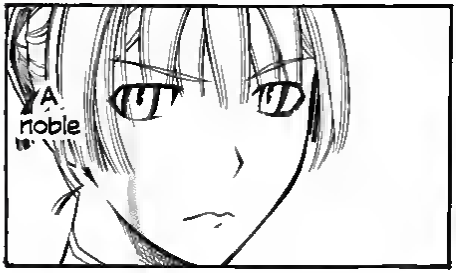
I neglected to protect you.
I was too focused on the duel.

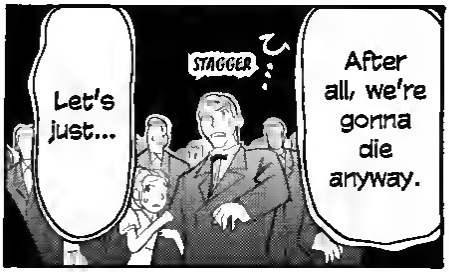

I apologize.
STEP

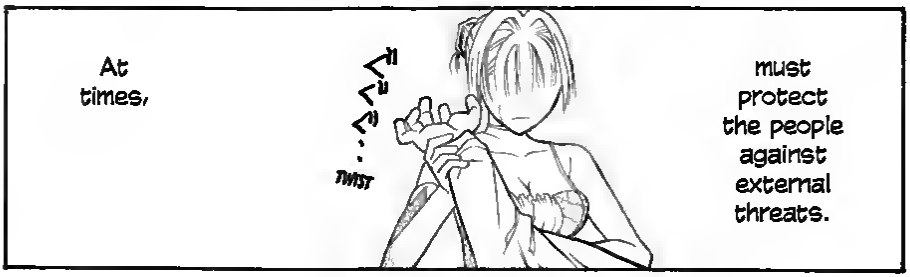
Even if you win and Paulo's punished...
TWIST
TWIST
Think about it.

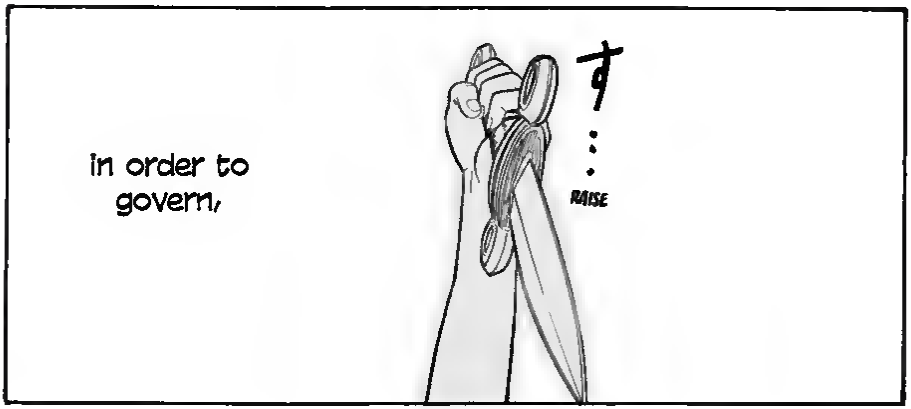

He's gonna be out of jail in no time.
Money talks. Same with power.

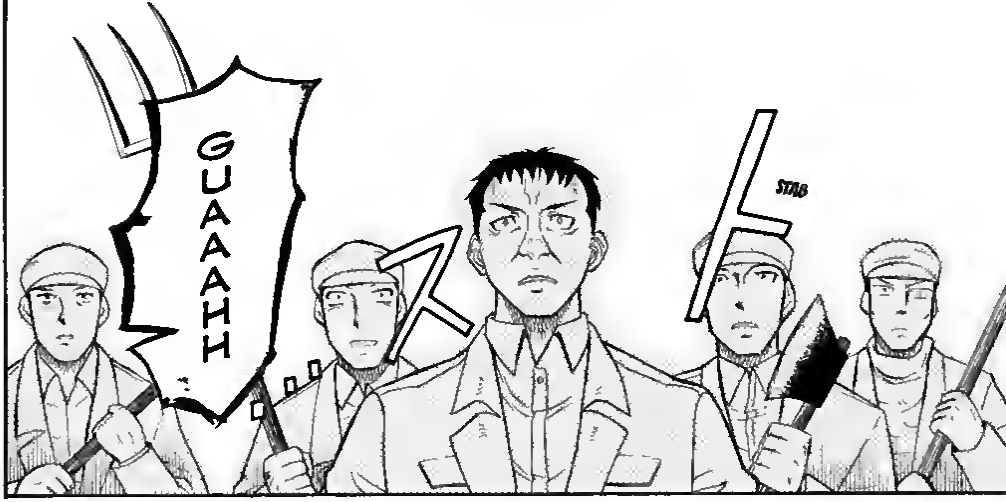
Best to kill everyone right now.
MUMBLE
He's right.

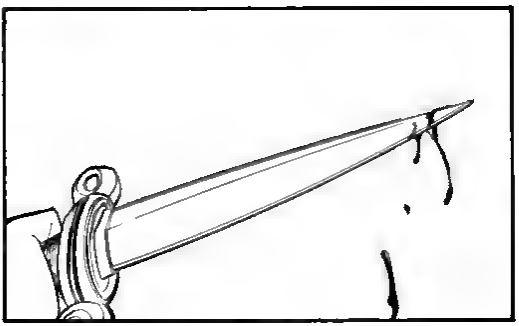

A noble


Let's just...
STAGGER
After all, we're gonna die anyway.


At times,
TWIST
must protect the people against external threats.


in order to govern,
RAISE


GUAAAHH
STAB



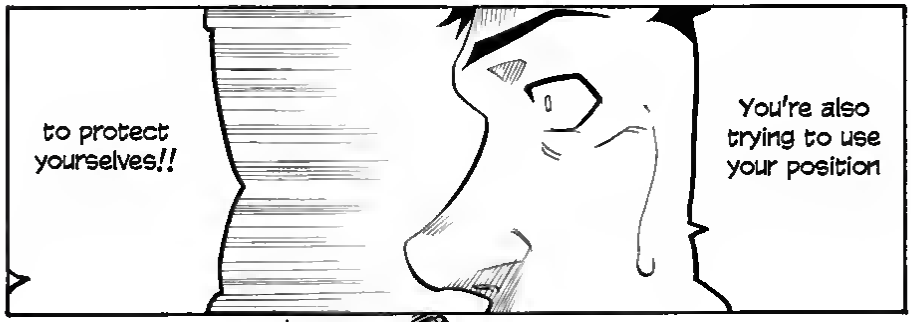
one must fight

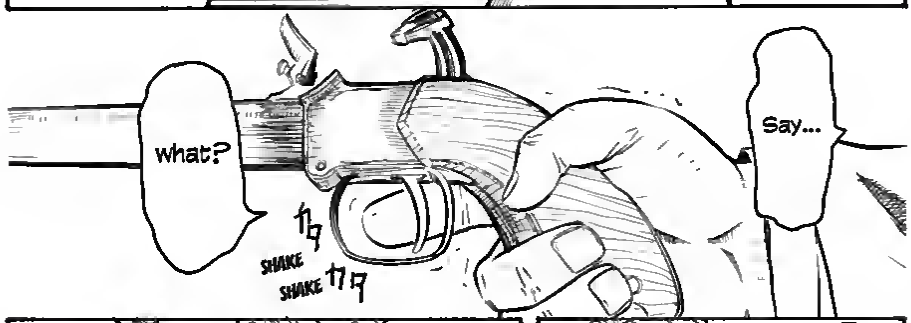
sworn to protect.
the people one has
The wench stabbed my hands!

HA HA HA!
Hah!
I was stupid to fall for this!
I knew it! There's no way in hell a noble's gonna take our side.
siding with anyone.
I'm not
I'll kill you first, woman!
KLIKKK
Trying to have it both ways, eh?

That doesn't mean you can treat us like this.
We're nobles, that's right.
Noblemen also have families
and loved ones!

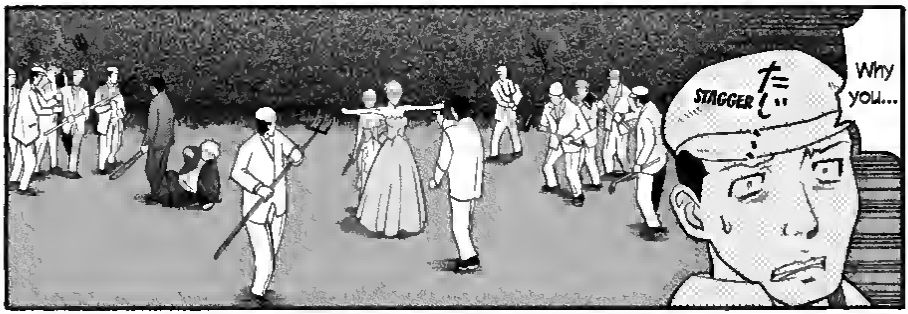
Do you think being a poor commoner justifies murder!?
How would killing us be justice?

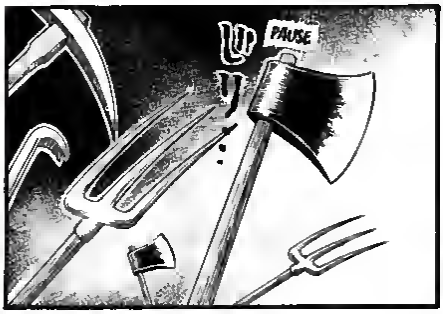

to protect yourselves!!
You're also trying to use your position

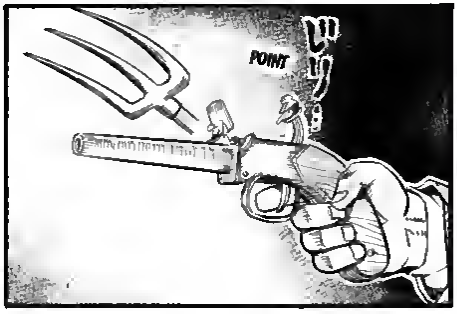

what?
SHAKE SHAKE
Say...

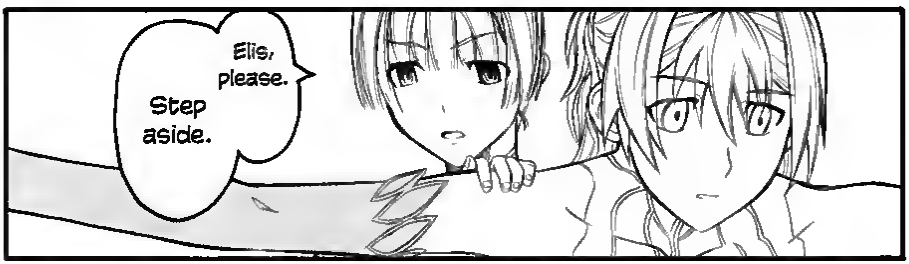
Can you wait a little longer?
PAT
If this place goes to hell, take the lieutenant and get out.
I'll find a way—
Oreldo
…
We're done here.

Huh? Why?
You're part of her unit, right?
Could you hold off a little bit?
She's trying so hard.
JU-KCHT
You shouldn't have come here. They're gonna think...
Damnit...
Trying to get outta here with that car, eh?
You traitor!
I'm the wife of a soldier. I'm prepared for the funerals of both my husband and myself.
Don't lump me in with violent gangs such as yourself.

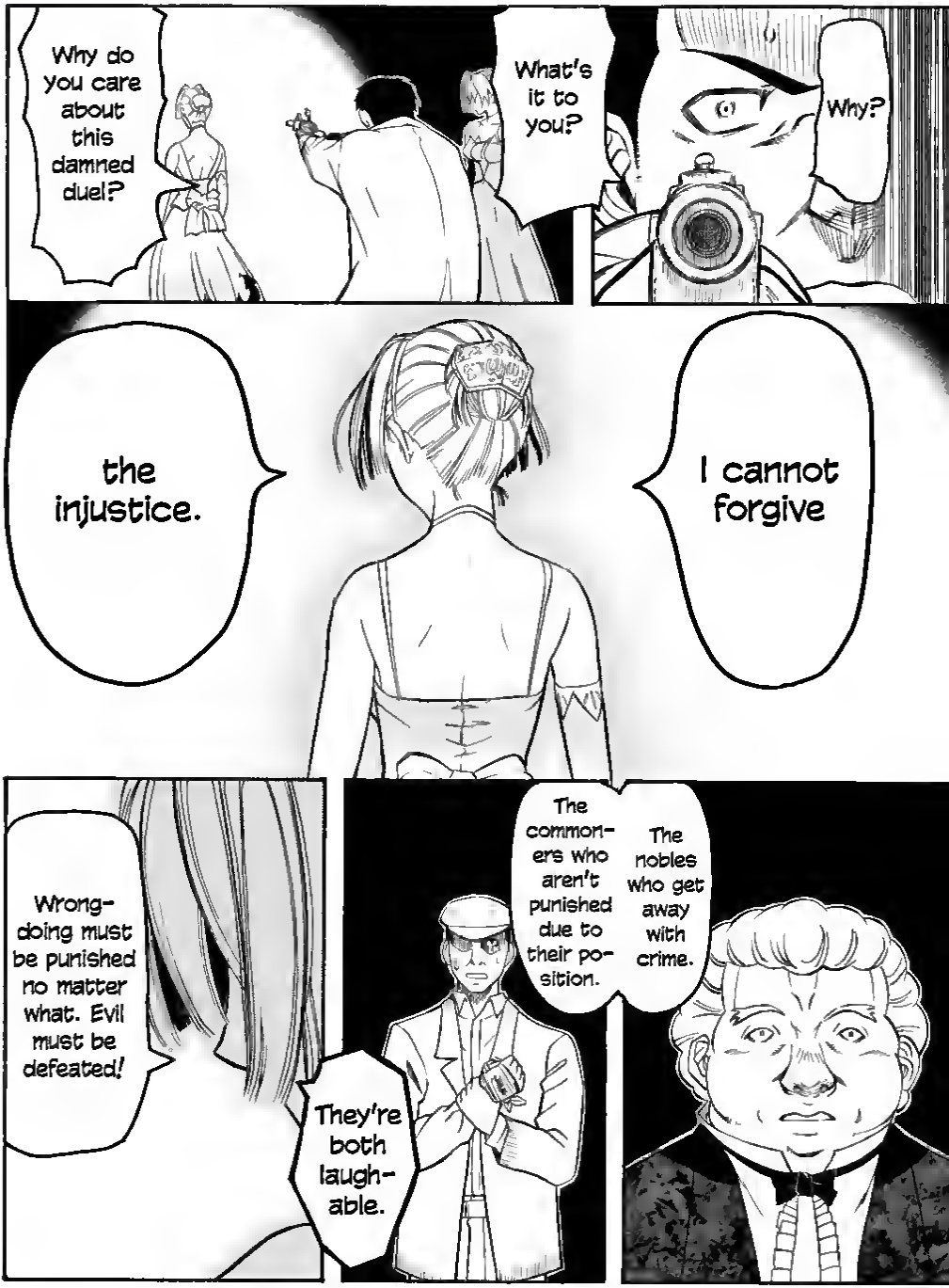

STAGGER
Why you...


PAUSE


POINT

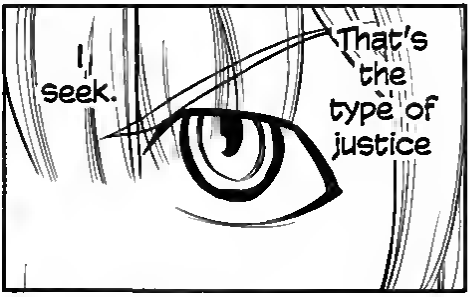

Elis, please.
Step aside.

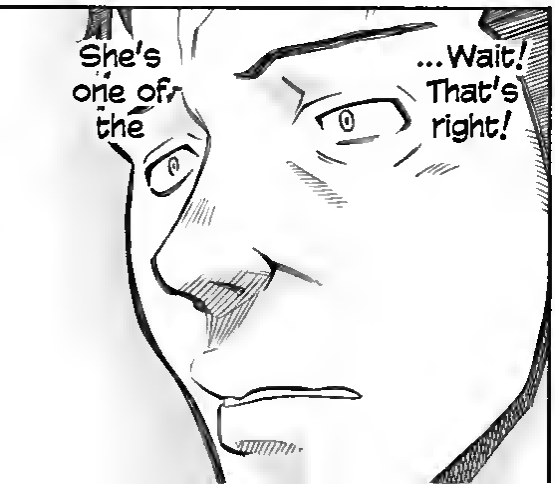
a duel.
I'm in the middle of


Why do you care about this damned duel?
What's it to you?
Why?
I cannot forgive
the injustice.
Wrong-doing must be punished no matter what. Evil must be defeated!
They're both laugh-able.
The commoners who aren't punished due to their position.
The nobles who get away with crime.

I don't care if it's a noble, a commoner,
or the emperor himself!

MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
Did she mention the emperor?
That's treason!!!


That's the type of justice
I seek.


She's one of the
...Wait! That's right!

I don't understand.
Why...

To be truly fair,

she can't side with anyone.

She can't side with the aristocrats or the commoners.

Not with family or friends.

Not even with people she wants to protect.

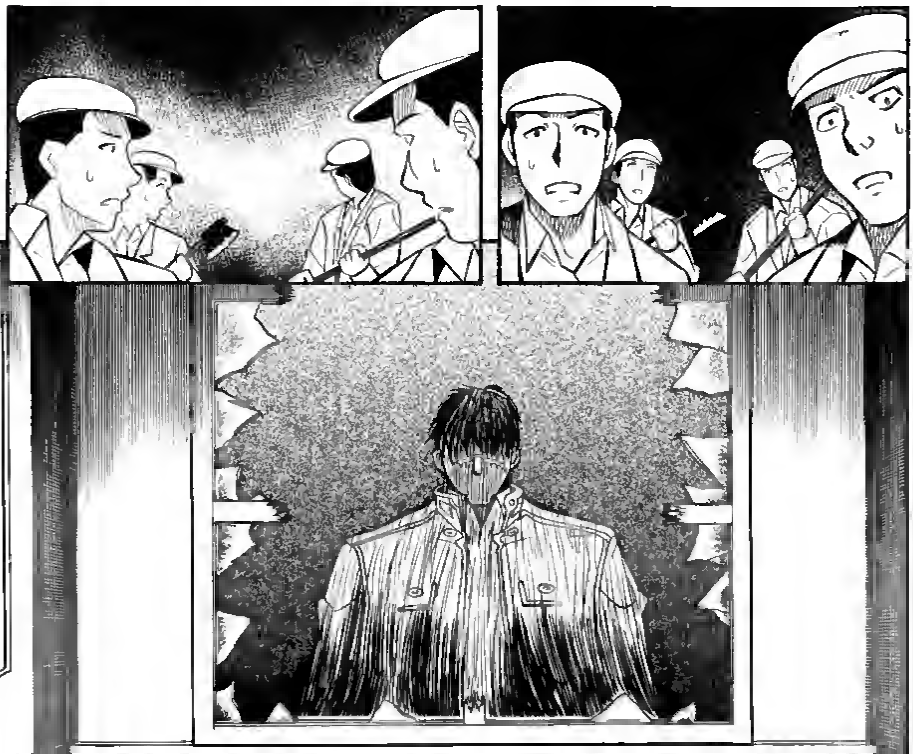
Nobody should
side with her, either.
In order to take her nobility seriously,
she must walk an increasingly lonely path.
You mentioned commoners and nobles.
Where do soldiers fit in?
What?
We may not be justified in any way.
We can't take anymore!!
DASH
We believed that this massacre would quench our rage! We bet our lives on it!

KER-ASSHAH!
What the—
THUD
ROLL
ROLL
ROLL
BOHKK

UN... ghhh
Hey! Get up!
What's wrong with you?!

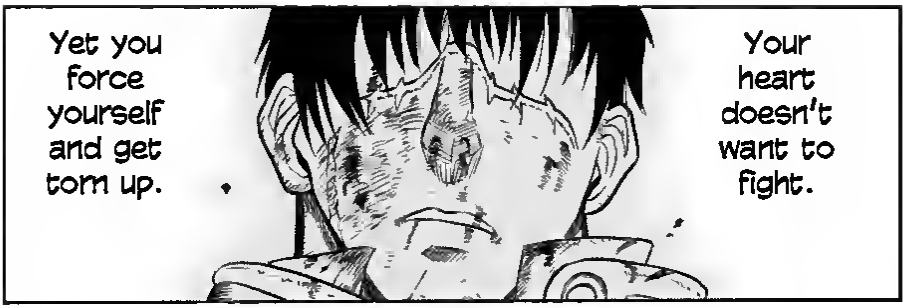
NHH...
NO...
SHIVER SHIVER

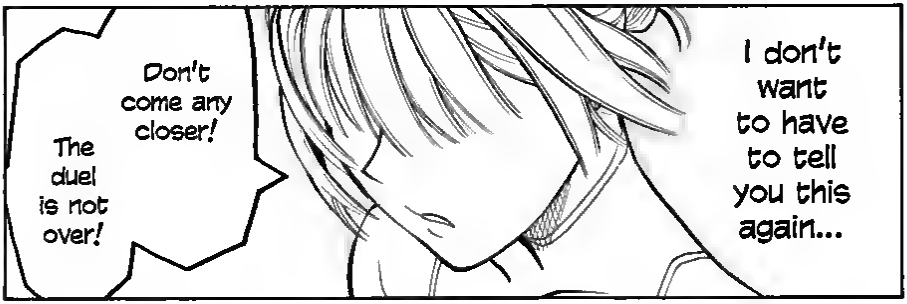
You're a Lodelian Guard!
You must not show weakness in public!

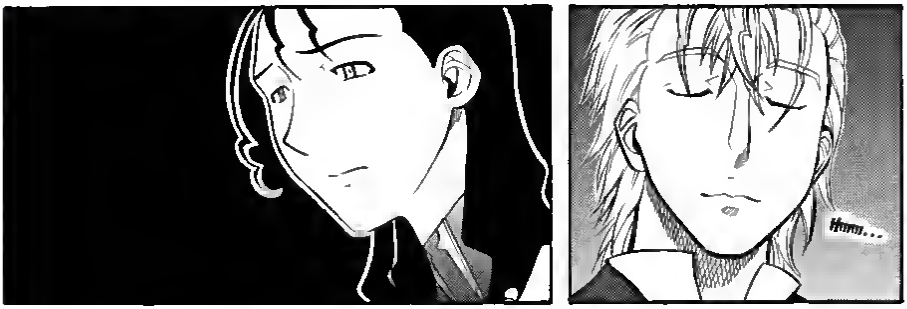


JERK
UGH
NHHH
GGHH
CRUNCH
STEP
GYAAAAAAA
AAA-AAAAA
AA-AAA-AAA
CRUNCH

AAA
AAAA
AAAAIIII
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
Stop!
Don't force me to say it.


Yet you force yourself and get torn up.
Your heart doesn't want to fight.


Don't come any closer!
The duel is not over!
I don't want to have to tell you this again...


Hmm...

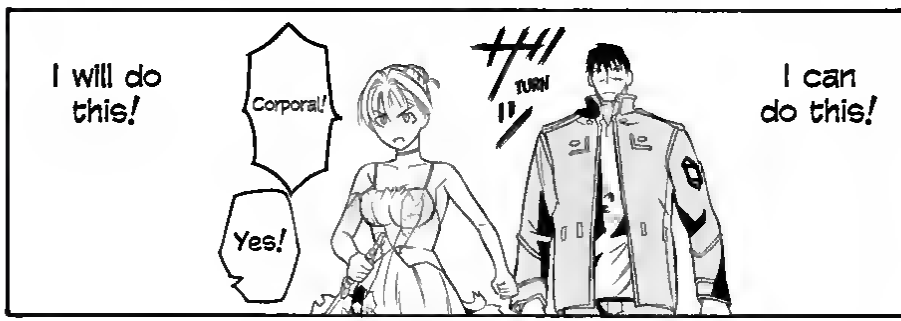
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
I told you to stand back.
Why did you come?
I'm a noble.
Nobles must stand alone.

Lieutenant...
There are many things I have to do on my own.
I can't do anything about you being an aristocrat.
SQUEEZE
ギュ…
Right…
Alice Malvin and Randel Oland may have to be alone for the rest of their lives.

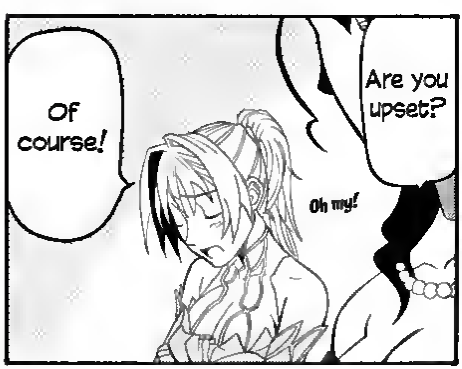
I met someone
who wasn't just a noble
or a soldier.
I met the lieutenant of Pumpkin Scissors.
It's my duty to protect you.
After all,
I'm your corporal.

?
Cor…
MUMBLE
ボソ
Cor…
Corporal?
Yes,
Lieutenant!

I'm also a lieutenant!
Right. I'm not just a noble.


I will do this!
Corporal!
Yes!
TURN
I can do this!

Take off your jacket.


Are you upset?
Oh my!
Of course!

Don't wander off!
Please!
You're back!
Oh!
There's the perky one!

She's getting all jazzed
after ruining that dress of hers!

We must prove that we're not planning to escape!
What...
Machs, shut off the engine!
stop flirting with married women!
Stupid girl!
What...
Oreldo, protect Lord Paulo like your life depends on it and
Make sure nobody disturbs this duel.
Corporal, you protect my back.

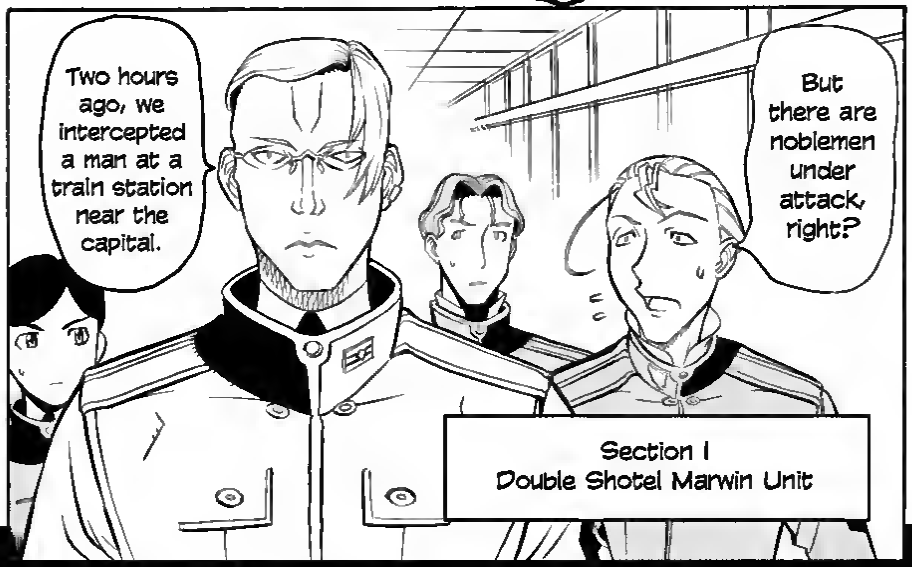
SNIFF
Yes, Lieutenant.
I can smell my unit...
SNAP
I'm back in my territory now.

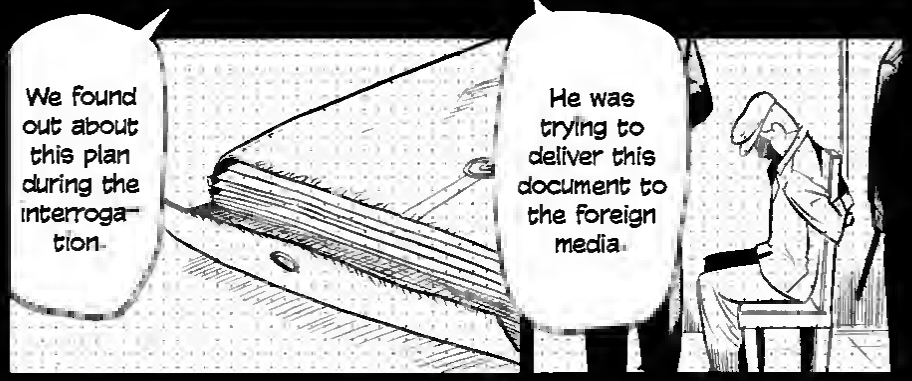
SIGH
What the...
This is now
SLAM
STOMP

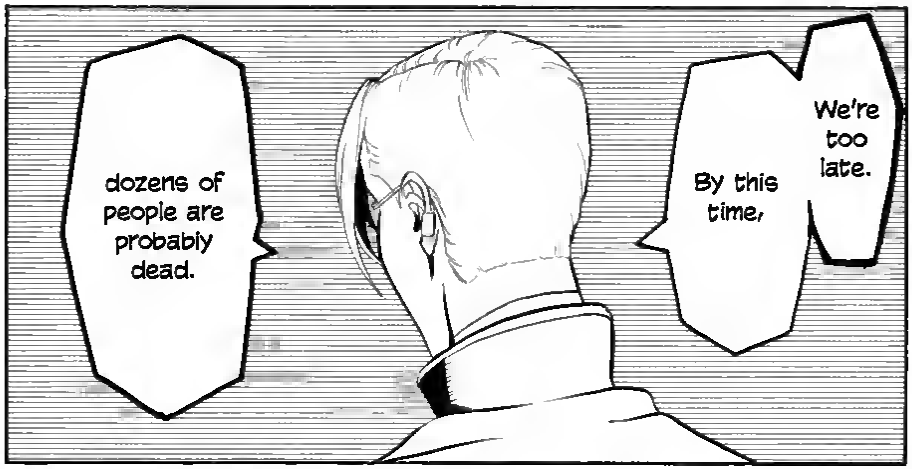
HA!
DASH
a Pumpkin Scissors operation!

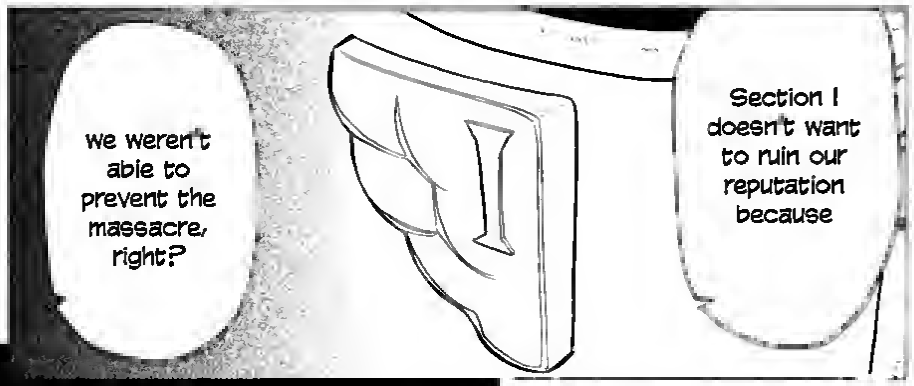
PumpkinScissors

DASH
DASH
DASH
What?
We're not planning a rescue!?


Two hours ago, we intercepted a man at a train station near the capital.
But there are noblemen under attack, right?
Section 1
Double Shotel Marwin Unit


We found out about this plan during the interrogation.
He was trying to deliver this document to the foreign media.

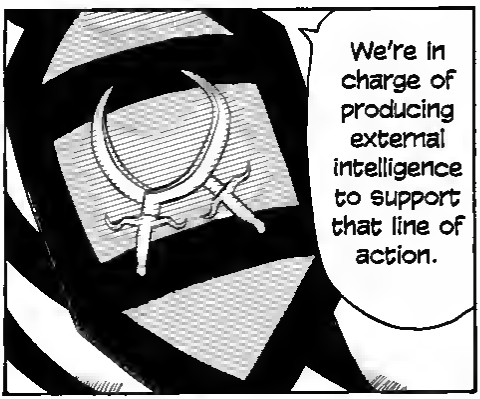

We're too late.
By this time,
dozens of people are probably dead.


Section I doesn't want to ruin our reputation because
we weren't able to prevent the massacre, right?

We're blocking the path to the ball so we can
claim that we happened upon the rioters and arrested them.
GULP

such tragedies can be prevented if the government grants us more power.
At that point, we can "discover" the massacre and demand that

Uh Cap- tain!


We're in charge of producing external intelligence to support that line of action.

then
If a plan like this hasn't yielded any dead bodies,
There's a pos- sibility
that nobody has been killed yet!

See You Next Time!

Alice is soft!
I would have twisted the blade 90 degrees after stabbing his hand!
(Failed the Review)

Either way, the author's soft, too.
He didn't plan properly, hence I don't make an appearance in this volume!
He didn't do his homework!
I need to twist his arm 90 degrees...
(Failed the Review)

Oh, who am I?

I don't have a name yet!!
(More details in volume 5)

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction, or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

Ballroom Dance, page 5

Balls were one of the events associated with the aristocracy. As a result, balls appear frequently in Western fairy tales that involve aristocratic characters (examples include *Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty,* and *Cinderella*). Ballroom dance is a Western form of dance that requires a partner. The male partner is most often the "leader" and the female is the "follower."

Ballroom dancing is now enjoyed all over the world for recreation as well as sport. It was officially recognized as a sport by the International Olympic Committee. However, it is not featured during the summer or winter Olympics at this time.

FLAIL, PAGE 85

A flail has ane ar multiple heavy abjects secured ta a chain, which is attached ta a handle. The mast camman flail is a spiked sphere attached ta a handle, ane af which is shawn in the baak. There are alsa variatians where the weight(s) are attached ta the stick with a hinge instead. Other flails have multiple chains attached ta the stick withaut weights. Develaped during the Middle Ages, there are similar weapans acrass the glabe, with the Asian nunchaku being ane af the mare recagnizable anes.

There are several key advantages ta using the flail. Aside fram the weapan's ability ta kill, it cauld alsa split armar and shields, making the appanent incredibly vulnerable ta attack. It alsa had the ability ta insulate the user fram vibratians that can cause fatigue, unlike mare rigid weapans such as the sward. The flail faund favar with harsemen, wha cauld gain mamentum far their strikes an harseback thraugh the speed af the harse withaut campramising their balance. It's alsa a difficult weapan ta black because unlike rigid weapans, the flail can wrap and/ar curve araund abjects.

On the ather hand, there are disadvantages ta this weapan. Far ane, it is nat always effective in clase quarters as the user requires raam ta swing the weapan. It's alsa much less accurate than rigid weapans, and an inexperienced user can injure himself quite easily with the weapan.

There is alsa a farming taal knawn as the flail.

MACHETE, PAGE 90

The machete is associated with jungles, which is reflected in this book. While it appears here as a formidable weapon, the main use for the machete is as a farming/gardening tool because of its ability to hack through difficult and persistent vegetation. It's even a useful kitchen tool due to the cleaverlike shape of the blade. People also use it as a simple woodworking tool. As a result, it's often considered an essential and versatile tool in many households throughout the globe.